



A N
E X P O S I T I O N
O F T H E
N E W T E S T A M E N T;
I N T E N D E D A S A N
I N T R O D U C T I O N
T O
The S T U D Y of the S C R I P T U R E S,
B Y
Pointing out the L E A D I N G S E N S E, and C O N N E C T I O N
O F T H E
S A C R E D W R I T E R S.

By W I L L I A M G I L P I N, M. A.

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NEW-FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

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M. D C C . X C .

T O T H E
HONORABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND
T H E
LORD BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

MY LORD,

AMONG the many expositions of the scriptures, I know none of the kind I now offer, under your Lordship's patronage, to the public. You exactly hit my idea, when you called it a *readable* one—in opposition, I suppose, to the generality of expositions, which are too diffuse to be *read* with ease—tho much fitter to be *consulted*, than mine.

Tho I have not the presumption, my Lord, to suppose that mine can be of much use to the professed scholar; yet I am willing to flatter myself,

myself, it may be of some assistance to two classes of people—to the younger students in divinity, as an introduction to the scriptures—and to those, whose engagements in the world, or necessary business, may prevent their making deeper researches.

Your Lordship knows how many years I have employed upon this work; and how long it hath lain by me: and yet, tho I hope I have neither been deficient in reading, in thinking, nor in consulting my friends on the subject, I still, my Lord, bring it forward with apprehension. Nothing is more arduous, than to comment on the scriptures—to *publish* our own interpretations of the *word of God*. In many places we *must conjecture*; and there will ever be a variety of opinions. I humbly however trust in God, that I have hazarded no conjecture, nor have given any explication of obscure points, inconsistent with the *general sense* of scripture, which *must* be our *guide* in all *dubious passages*.

Your

Your Lordship's approbation of my work is one of the best grounds of my hope, that it may in some measure answer the ends I propose. I am, my Lord, with the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And obliged, humble Servant,

WILLIAM GILPIN.

Vicar's Hill,

April 12th, 1790.

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GENERAL PREFACE.

AT the time of Jesus Christ's birth, the whole world enjoyed profound peace. The sovereignty of Rome, under Augustus Cæsar, had united, and in a degree civilized, almost all the known nations of the earth. This indeed may be considered as one of those modes of preparation, which God had provided for the reception of the gospel. The several parts of the empire were not only rendered more accessible to it; but were better disposed to receive it. The age was more enlightened: impostures were more easily detected; and the evidences of that religion, which wished for the clearest light, were produced with greater force.

Among other nations, the Jews fell under the government of the Romans. They felt, like the rest of the conquered provinces, the avarice and exactions of pretors, and publicans; but on the whole, they were humanely treated. They were suffered to live under their own laws, with a few restrictions; and their religion was left inviolate. The high priest exercised his office; and the Sanadrim, in a great degree their power. It is true indeed, the emperor sometimes interfered in the promotion of these rulers: yet still their functions went regularly on.

In the mean time, the nation became exceedingly corrupt. The Babylonish captivity, which had been the punishment of their idolatry, had effectually rooted out that crime. But they had adopted others. The spirit of their religion was gone: and tho the form of it remained; yet some rites of Babylonish, Egyptian, Syriac, and Arabic origin, had in some degree polluted the purity of the Mosaic ritual. Their morals too were much infected. Roman luxuries, and Roman vices had found their way into Judea, and had greatly corrupted the people at large; but

chiefly in the vicinity of Herod, who was proud of adopting the licentious manners of his conquerors †.

The learning of the Jews in our Saviour's time consisted almost intirely in the glosses, and interpretations of their rabbies upon the law. This licence in religion was in an earlier period unknown. The old Jewish seer, or prophet, who was inabled to work miracles in proof of his divine commission, was the sole interpreter of scripture. He recorded all events both civil and ecclesiastical. He warned the disobedient of the judgments of God; and reproved both kings, and people. Under this high authority, all licentious opinions were restrained; and the Jewish church was unacquainted with schism.

After Malachi, who was the last prophet, and lived about four hundred years before Christ, the Jewish church by degrees divided into different sects. Of these the most remarkable, both in themselves, and as they so frequently occur in scripture, were the Pharisees, and Sadduces.

The hypocritical character of the Pharisee is well known; his solemn deportment; his parade of religion; his pride, and contemptuous behaviour; his strictness in trifles; his licence in matters of importance. It was his grand tenet, that tradition was equal to the law; and was given by God to Moses, as a supplement to the pentateuch. From this fund he imposed various observances on the people, which contributed more than any thing else to destroy the genuine spirit of their religion. After our Saviour's time these traditionary ordinances were collected, and became the Misna, and the Talmud. These books, tho very corrupt commentaries on the Jewish law, have however been of great use among christians, as they throw various lights upon the customs, and proverbial phrases of the Jews; and make the scriptures better understood.

The Sadducee was a Jewish freethinker. He denied a future state; and *believed neither angel, nor spirit*. As he acknowledged however the pentateuch, in which he found many narratives of angels, it is difficult to account for his disbelief of these heavenly beings; unless he supposed

† See an account of the corrupt state of Judea at this time, in Lardn. Credib. P. I. B. I.

them to be a sort of temporary phantoms, raised merely to serve particular ends.

In opposition to these latitudinarians, another Jewish sect ran into an opposite extreme. These were the Essenes, who carried their religious severities to a great height. As they lived chiefly in remote parts, they were little known. Their name is not mentioned in scripture; tho it is supposed they are alluded to in some passages; particularly by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians†.

Some few however there were, who with rational piety still endeavoured to preserve the purity of scripture; allowing no arbitrary interpretation, and disavowing tradition. Among these, we may suppose, were Simeon, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea; and indeed all, who read the prophetic writings without prejudice, and acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah.

The great truth of an expected Messiah, was what all sects universally agreed in believing. But while it filled the true interpreter of scripture with holy joy, and pious hope, it had a very different effect upon the body of the Jewish nation. Notwithstanding the gentle treatment they had received from the Romans, they bore the yoke with impatience. They were not actuated by a spirit of civil liberty, as other nations commonly were: but by a kind of spiritual pride. They were the descendants of Abraham; and conceiving themselves to be a free people, they never lost the hope, from a full dependence on the predictions of their prophets, of recovering their liberty. It is true, their prophetic deliverer was strongly marked with characters which could not possibly accord with a temporal prince. He was held out indeed as their Redeemer from bondage: and tho it appeared plain to the attentive interpreter, that this bondage was of a spiritual nature; yet the nation in general overlooking the humiliating circumstances of these descriptions, applied only the splendid, and triumphal parts to their expected deliverer: and rejected Christ, as he did not answer *their* ideas of a Messiah. At the same time they were continually breaking out into rebellions through the deceptions of *false Christs and false prophets*; and thus held out in their belief of pro-

† See chap. ii, 23.

phesies, which never could be fulfilled, but in Jesus Christ, a very convincing proof that he was the real Messiah.

That a general expectation of a Messiah should prevail in Judea, is not surprizing; as the prophetic intimations of this great event were so clear, and so precise. But it is somewhat singular, that the same idea should be found among heathen nations; as it certainly was, about the time of our Saviour's appearance. Suetonius*, and Tacitus † both speak of a king, that was expected to arise out of Judea at that period. The *Pollio* of Virgil also is a poem of a very peculiar character. It abounds with evangelical traces, through whatever means the poet became possessed of them. But Plato presents us with passages still more surprizing. He tells us *a divine revelation is necessary, to explain the true worship of God—to add authority to moral precepts—to assist our best endeavours in a virtuous course—to fix the future rewards, and punishments of virtuous, and vicious conduct—and to point out some acceptable expiation for sin*‡. In some passages he comes even yet closer to christianity. In one place he introduces Socrates telling Alcibiades, that, *in future time a divine Person should appear, who in pure love to mankind should remove all darkness from his mind; and instruct him how to offer his prayers, and praises in the most acceptable way to the divine Being*.§ And in another place he introduces the same philosopher giving the following account of this divine teacher. *With all his illustrious qualities, says he, mankind will not submit to him. Nay they will use him with every indignity. He shall be scourged; tormented; his eyes burnt out; and at length, after every instance of contumely, he shall be put to death.*||

There can be little doubt, I think, but that all these intimations from heathen writers must have originated from the Jewish scriptures; which we have reason to believe were open to the learned inquiries of

* Vit. Vesp. cap. iv.

† Hist. lib. v.

‡ See a fuller collection of similar passages in Blackwell's fac. Classics. Vol. II. p. 88.

§ Alcib. II. p. 150.

|| Plato uses the word *αναχιδλειυθησεται*, which some good lexicons render *crucified*. See Plat. de Repub. p. 361.

those days. The Jewish nation was certainly the great mean, which Providence made use of to prepare the world for the reception of christianity. The grandeur of their temple—the splendor of their religious rites; and the great renown of their lawgiver—all conspired to draw the attention of learned foreigners: while their travels; their wars, both successful, and unsuccessful; their commerce; and above all, their captivities, tended to disseminate through the means of their scriptures, those high expectations which their prophets had raised.—If we do not suppose all this, we are puzzled to guess, whence these heathen authors draw intimations of so extraordinary a kind: we must at least believe, with regard to Plato in particular, that his reason led him to see those great defects in the nature of man, which the gospel was intended to reform.

But whatever hopes the heathen world might entertain on this head, the birth of Christ compleatly fulfilled the whole Jewish dispensation. It threw a new splendor on the law, and on the wisdom of the lawgiver. The Levitical ceremonies, which on the face of them appeared so singular, and unintelligible; assumed perspicuity, propriety, and beauty; when it was found, that as types they figured out a more explicit revelation of God's will; and that the great scheme of the redemption of man might almost palpably be traced through every one of them. On the other hand, the gospel shone with a much fuller blaze of evidence; when it appeared, that the life, the death, and the office of the Messiah had not only been predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament; but had been portrayed, as it were, and visibly represented, by the rites of the oldest religion on the face of the earth; and the only religion, which bore the stamp of a divine institution.

According to the whole tenor of prophecy, Jesus Christ was born in the lowest station; tho' of the family of David. Bethlehem was the place of his birth; but his chief abode was Nazareth, where he continued in obscurity, till the thirtieth year of his age.—About that time John the baptist, who had been miraculously born, appeared in the office of forerunner to the Messiah; calling men to repent, and prepare themselves for the gospel.

When John's ministry ceased, that of Jesus commenced. His first business was to chuse disciples; to assist him to preach the gospel; to propagate it after his death; and chiefly to be witnesses of his life, and resurrection.

resurrection. He chose them from the lowest stations; and had no respect to the abilities of the mind; but to the sincerity of the disposition. He particularly avoided persons endowed with human learning; lest the gospel should be attributed to natural causes*.—Thus accompanied, he preached the gospel through Judea, during the space of three years; and confirmed the truth of it by miracles.

The religion he taught, was very plain: however it hath often been wrought by the inventions of man, into a complex, and mysterious institution. It was founded on the lost condition of mankind; and their utter inability of restoring themselves to God's favour. Faith in him as their Saviour, and lawgiver, was the first condition he required; and that men might not believe without a sufficient ground for their faith, he appealed to the prophecies, he fulfilled; the miracles he performed; and the holy doctrines he taught.—As the fruits of faith, he expected men to repent of their sins, and lead holy lives; thus restoring themselves, through God's grace, (which was promised to their prayers, and endeavours) to that purity of heart, which they had lost. These were the plain conditions of the gospel: and on the performance of them he promised them the pardon of their sins through his death; and a restoration to that everlasting happiness, which their first father had forfeited.—He did not however openly profess himself the Messiah, even to his own disciples; at least not till towards the conclusion of his ministry. Their prejudices were yet too strong to bear the truth. The idea of a *crucified Redeemer* was still beyond their conception. He expressed himself therefore indirectly on this head; but yet with such perspicuity, that after his resurrection, and ascension, his disciples remembering what he had said, received it as full conviction.—On many occasions also he used the parabolic manner of teaching; which was indeed the common vehicle of knowledge in the east. The talmudical writings are full of it. The *precepts* of the gospel our Lord renders sufficiently plain; tho he sometimes inforces them by a parable. But the chief use he makes of this mode of instruction, is in describing the future progress of his kingdom, and it's reception in the world. These

* 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

notices the ill-disposed could not misapply; while the believer afterwards seeing them compleatly fulfilled, (as parables of this kind have a prophetic cast) was confirmed in his faith.

The preaching, and miracles of Jesus had their due effect on the simplicity of the common people, who attended him in great numbers; tho many of them probably under the expectation of a temporal deliverance; which he always however endeavoured to repress. The Jewish rulers, in the mean time, could not bear the idea of a religion, which was intended to supersede the Levitical law; and to introduce all the nations of the earth to the same degree of favour with God; which the Jews had arrogantly appropriated to themselves. But the character of Jesus was so popular, that his enemies were obliged to act with great caution. Having at length however obtained a favourable opportunity of seizing him privately, through the treachery of one of his disciples, they accused him to the Roman governor; and had influence enough to procure his condemnation. On the third day after his death he arose from the dead, and appeared to many people. We have an account of his appearing to more than *five hundred persons at one time**. But his apostles were the only persons, whom he appointed as his *chosen witnesses*†, to attest and record this great truth to the world. He continued with his disciples on earth only a short time after his resurrection, and then ascended finally into heaven.

After these great events, the disciples, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, with which they were powerfully endowed, spread the gospel through various parts of the world. It had hitherto been confined to Judea: but the prophecies which foretold the call of the Gentiles, began now to be fulfilled.—The next step, they took was to provide for the future state of the church, by writing faithful narratives of the life, and doctrines of their Master. The doctrines are not drawn out in systematic form; but blended with the life of their divine Author; and calculated,

* 1 Cor. xv. 6.

† Acts x. 41.

not so much to exercise the understanding, as to impress the heart:— The epistles took their origin from the errors of the times. While the Jewish church was governed by prophets, who had the whole under their eye, licentious opinions, as we observed, were easily restrained. But this order could not subsist in the christian church, which was infinitely dispersed. It pleased the divine Providence therefore to leave it, after it's first establishment, to it's own native force, and evidence. Well-disposed persons had all the means they could desire of being acquainted with the truth: but it was soon found, that ill-disposed persons began to mix their prejudices, and private views with the simplicity, and purity of the gospel. We meet with many traces of this undue mixture even in apostolical times. The opinions of Simon Magus—of the Nicolaitans—of Hymeneus, and Philetus, were all of this kind. But the wrong opinions, which were the most prevalent in the early church, were those of judaizing christians. A numerous body of these, in all parts, being still zealous for the Levitical law, blended their Jewish ideas with christianity; placing circumcision on the same footing with faith in Christ, and good works.

To obviate these, and other licentious opinions, the apostles therefore, and especially St. Paul, wrote their several epistles. The primary occasion it is true, of most of these epistles, was to oppose the erroneous opinions, which prevailed in the different churches to which they were written: but still they were intended to be of use to future christians by giving them just ideas of christianity. And indeed many of the erroneous opinions of later times are very similar to those of ancient date.

The style of these sacred writings is in general plain, and unadorned. The narratives particularly are drawn up with wonderful simplicity. The same artless character, which marks the lives of the writers, distinguishes also their writings. Numerous instances indeed we find of strong figurative expressions: but these are merely the idioms of eastern phraseology. In point of composition, I think, it must be owned, these writings are by no means elegant models, according to the rules of criticism now established; nor equal in this respect to many works, both historical, and philosophical, which have been handed down to us from antiquity.

Some

Some learned writers * have taken great pains to evince their elegance, and classical purity. But I think none have gone much farther than to shew, that a few words, and phrases, which have been esteemed barbarous in the New Testament, may be found in good writers. They have not entered critically, into the composition of these writings; which on this plan, ought chiefly to have been laboured; both as it is the most essential part of elegant writing; and as the sacred writers appear to have paid so little attention to it.

But the credit of these divine books appears not in any respect to depend on inquiries of this kind; which indeed seem rather debasing. It appears equally absurd to suppose, either that the Holy Spirit attended to the trifling forms, and critical rules of human composition; or that the writers, if we suppose them left to themselves in this matter, had any eye to the elegance of their works. How would every serious man think they had mistaken the point, if they had attended to all the littlenesses of fine writing, while they were engaged in the great work of publishing salvation to mankind? And yet Dr. Myddleton, with a strange hardness of criticism, thinks their want of elegance is an argument of their want of inspiration †.

In the manner therefore of *cloathing their thoughts* they seem to have been left intirely to themselves; and to have written with that simplicity, which men, big with their subject, but unversed in letters, might be supposed to write. Elegant writing is matter of taste. It is directed to the imagination. Their writings are directed to the heart.

To put this matter however out of dispute, the apostles themselves repudiated every idea of elegance, and refinement of stile. Their constant language is, “ We come not with the excellency of speech, or of wisdom. We determine not to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Our speech, and our preaching is not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom: but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men;

* See particularly Blackwall in his Dissert. on the Sac. Claf.

† See his introd. Lectures, p. 43.

“but in the power of God.”—Here is a reason given to shew even the impropriety of any attention to these matters.

In St. Paul's writings indeed we are often pleased with the arrangement of his subject, as well as his manner of treating it. But St. Paul was a man of letters; and writes like one. His companion also St. Luke, is supposed to have had a liberal education; the effect of which we discover in his writings. An accurate mode of writing was the *natural* vehicle of their thoughts. But they lay no stress on any of these human accomplishments. The former, we have seen, absolutely rejects them. In works therefore which have superior claims to our regard, they are of no consequence. Elegance would be no addition to their value; and the want of it therefore can be no detraction from their merit.

It will readily be supposed, that writings of such celebrity, as these gospels, and epistles, would give birth to many spurious compositions in imitation of them. In fact there were many such. Gospels, and epistles were written; some with good designs; others with bad; some in the true spirit of christianity; others in a legendary, and fabulous strain. Of these spurious productions we have many traces in antiquity. As they multiplied, it became necessary to distinguish them from such, as were of genuine origin. At what time, the canon of the Holy Scriptures was settled cannot easily be ascertained; certainly long before it was recognized, about the year 365, by the council of Laodicea. It is the most general opinion, however, that it was settled nearly in the form, in which we now have it, before the middle of the second century: for in that early period, we have reason to believe, it was received in all christian churches, as a confirmed rule of faith, and manners.

In this selection nothing was allowed, but what was known, (and then it might be well known) to be derived from apostolic times. Tho many of these spurious writings were intrinsically good; yet, as they could not bring the testimony of antiquity, they were rejected. The epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, for instance, was in great esteem;

and long read publicly in churches; but it could never get admission into the sacred canon. Eusebius expressly affirms, that the three first gospels were authorized by St. John, who lived to an extreme old age; and that he added his own as a supplement. This however does not seem entirely supported by internal evidence. That the same apostle collected the other books of the sacred canon, is mere matter of supposition: indeed it is most probable, that as it was well known from the earliest ages, which of these sacred books were authentic; no *formal selection* was necessary.

Of the authenticity therefore of these books, the candid inquirer can entertain no doubt. Every one knows how difficult it is to ascribe the works of an author, whose name they bear, to any other person. No combination of men could ever attribute the works of Livy to Tacitus; or of Tacitus to Livy. But with regard to the authenticity of the scriptures we argue on still firmer ground. They have been regularly traced. Dr. Lardner, in his credibility of the gospel-history, hath adduced a series of quotations from the several books of the New Testament, in writings still existing, even as far as to the very times of the apostles; which is, I think, a proof of the authenticity of scripture, short only of absolute demonstration.

True it is, that the epistle to the Hebrews—the epistle of James—the second epistle of Peter—the two last of John—the epistle of Jude—and the Revelations, were all received later into the sacred canon, than the other books of scripture. The case was, most of those writings were addressed to christian churches in *general*; which sometimes might occasion a less certain proof of their authenticity; as they were not delegated to the care of any particular body of christians. However, as all these writings were received at last, and universally acknowledged; we should consider this caution as a convincing argument in their favour.

About the *dates** of many of these sacred writings there are different opinions still among learned men: but there are very few circumstances,

* The reader may here see two chronological tables of the epistles, widely different from each other; and yet both supported by men of distinguished reputation. For myself, I think

the Gaderenes, or of the Gergesenes; which two people were contiguous? The attestation to the truth of the gospel by a miracle, which is the great leading fact, and all that is necessary, is the same in all these cases.—What again signifies it to the truth of religion, whether that noble discourse, which our Saviour gave the people, and which is commonly called the *sermon on the mount*, was really spoken on a *mount*, or on a *plain*? Our Saviour spoke many discourses, no doubt, in both situations: and it might easily escape the narrator's memory, in which of them this particular discourse was spoken. If St. Matthew, and St. Luke had written in concert, they would have taken care, no doubt, to agree in this particular. As they did not write in concert, there happens to be a trifling difference. But is the *main question* affected by it? Is there any difference in the *doctrine*, which the two evangelists delivered from their Master's mouth? This is all that is material; and all, that the Holy Spirit, we may suppose, saw necessary to *bring to their remembrance*.

Indeed if the evidence of the evangelists had been throughout miraculous, and inspired, why did their blessed Master carry them constantly with him as *witnesses* of what they saw, and heard. All this was totally unnecessary; and became at once unmeaning parade. Inspiration would have done the thing at once. But the great Author of nature never admits a miracle, where the ordinary course of providence is sufficient: and in recording a *plain fact*, a miraculous intervention is certainly *unnecessary*.

The bishop of Ossory in his preface to his harmony observes, that *a harmony by a juxtaposition of parallel passages, is often the best commentary*. It certainly is; and nobody can read the evangelists attentively without comparing parallel passages. But the observation cannot hold with regard to those passages, which are *marked with uncertainty*; and about which *harmonizers themselves are at variance*. *The evangelists, treating of the same subject*, says the bishop, quoting Mr. Lock, *do give great light to one another, and I think may, with the greatest advantage be read in harmony*. True: but we cannot suppose that Mr. Lock means here by *harmony*, every *arbitrary supposition*, that may be called so. He expressly says, he speaks only of the evangelists, *when treating of the same subject*. When it is uncertain, whether they *do treat of the same subject*, or *not*—when Le Clerk, for instance, thinks in one way; Dr. Doddridge in another; Dr. Macknight,

Macknight, or some other harmonist, in a third; and so on; we may be entertained with *ingenious conjectures*; but still we get no ground—the harmony rests on human authority; and we are still left in a field of uncertainty.—It appears therefore, we should only contend for the harmony of the gospels, when that harmony is *generally acknowledged*; and when the evangelists obviously, as Mr. Lock phrases it, *treat of the same subject*. Where conjecture begins, harmony ends.

It seems therefore a part of religious wisdom, to be cautious on this head. By laying the force of the evangelical evidence too strongly, as is often the case, on *it's exact concurrence in every particular*, the unsteady reader is led to suppose, that it's truth, in a great degree, depends on this concurrence; and when he sees it, as he often must see it, awkwardly supported, he may be apt to doubt the whole truth of the gospel from the production of this feeble mode of evidence. Like those skilful engineers therefore, who give up some untenable out-post, that they may draw the strength of the garrison, where it will be most wanted, it should seem we should withdraw our defence from these weaker parts, which seem not worth maintaining, and employ it on those strong holds, which are both capable of defence, and of sufficient importance to be defended. "The authority of the scriptures (as the sagacious Erasmus observed long ago) would not be invalidated, tho small inaccuracies should be found in them in matters of little, or no consequence, as it is by no means clear, how far divine inspiration extended *."

I am fearful however of blaming those commentators, who on this plan, have chosen to blend all the evangelists together; and exhibit one narrative from four. But tho I dare not venture to blame them; I have taken a contrary method myself. My reasons are these.

In the first place, by explaining the evangelists separately, in the order in which we have them, the difficulties of each may the more easily be examined. When the four gospels are melted together, the *parts* of *each* are lost; and the reader is less able to look for explanations; which readily unfold themselves, when the books are turned over in their natural order. He is less able also to understand a difficulty, when he meets it out

* Epist. 376.

Proverbial modes of expression—the parabolic form of instruction—frequent allusions to the ceremonies of the mosaic law—together with the free and bold use of figurative language (tho clearly understood, when the scriptures were written) all tend, at this late day, to occasion obscurity.

Particles also, wrongly translated, which frequently occur, tend greatly to obscure the sacred text. It is not an easy matter to give particles their proper force; especially as they were considered (at least before criticism began to form its canons) as the most trivial parts of a discourse: whereas they are now justly acknowledged to be among the most important; inasmuch as they form that connection between the divisions of a sentence, on which its sense so greatly depends. It may be added also, that there are many particles, which in our version are rendered literally; tho in the original they are mere *expletives*, and should not have been rendered at all.

The manners and customs also of so remote an age, and country, introduce great confusion among *common readers*; who cannot easily reconcile themselves to what *appears* so absurd. It is difficult for them to conceive, how new wine should burst old bottles; or how a man can be taken in a bed to the top of a house, and let down with cords.—Under this head may be considered several of our Saviour's discourses to the Jews; which appear odd, and peculiar, when compared with any modern modes of expression; but were, at the time when spoken, easy, and familiar. This point, I think, deserves great attention: and particularly when we read the writings of St. John.

Even our being accustomed to read the scriptures *from our infancy*, may itself, without care, tend to occasion, and confirm our ignorance. What we are well acquainted with, seems easy; and passages, which, in fact, we do not understand, may often *appear intelligible*, merely because they are *familiar*.

But perhaps nothing has contributed so much to introduce obscurity into the sacred text, as the barbarous method of dividing it into chapters, and verses. The ancient manuscripts of the New Testament were, in general, without pointing, paragraph, or any other division of sentences;
often

often without any division of words*. A reader was then obliged to attend closely to the meaning, and connection of his author, in order to gather up the sense. This was however too hard upon him: it made reading painful: and was attended with many inconveniences. Chapters, sections, paragraphs, and points, have certainly their use. *Qui bene distinguit, bene docet.*

The first division, which the several books of the New Testament underwent, was into portions for lessons in churches. This, if properly done, had been judicious. It was certainly necessary. Some division of this kind was made as early as the fourth century. Afterwards Robert Stephens, following something of this kind, that had been introduced by Rabbi Nathan into the Hebrew scriptures, divided an edition, which he printed of the New Testament, into verses. He acted in this business wholly unauthorized; and, what is very extraordinary, this barbarous division has prevailed, I believe, over Europe; and indeed, wherever the Testament is read.

One should naturally imagine that the universal reception it met with, must have arisen from some great convenience, that attended it. Whereas, I suppose, the only thing that can be said in it's favour, is it's use in references; which was the professed end, which Stephens had in view, who was at the same time printing a concordance. This end might certainly have been answered, without mangling the text, by making marginal references; as cardinal Hugo, who composed the first concordance, had done before him.

In the mean time, the mischief of this arbitrary division, is truly lamentable. The scriptures, thus frittered, and broken into portions, independent of all sense, and connection, are changed from a continued narrative, or argument, into a number of aphorisms: and readers, instead of receiving their religion from the general scope of the gospel, are too much led to receive it from detached sentences. An opinion is proved by quoting a text: and what may not be so proved? Many unscriptural opinions, no doubt, have taken rise from this practice. For it is certainly

* This may be seen in the Alexandrine MS. which was given to Charles I. by the patriarch of Constantinople; and of which a beautiful fac-simile hath lately been printed.

much easier to prove a doctrine by half a dozen texts, which make a good *verbal proof*; than by the context; the scope of the argument; and the tenor of the gospel. Shakespear had divinity enough to see the absurdity of such proof:

In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it; and approve it with a text?

If a few divisions only were used, of a greater, or shorter length, to shew what passages have a closer, or more remote connection with each other (as books of all kinds, except the bible, are divided) what a different appearance would our English Testament assume!

In the mean time, it is the commentator's business to dispel the obscurity arising from all these causes. I know it is a popular argument, among young students, to depreciate the labours of commentators. "They perplex, and confound a reader: the naked text is studied more advantageously without them."—And no doubt, it is very laborious to go through the many formidable volumes of commentators; tho we confine ourselves to the best: and a student must be in earnest to attempt it; tho undoubtedly his labour would be repaid.

I apprehend nobody has contributed more to bring commentators into contempt, than Mr. Lock. He condemns them all in a body; which is not perhaps quite fair, as he is a commentator himself. The learning, and abilities of this great man will be respected by every scholar, and every christian: and the method he prescribes of reading St. Paul's epistles *frequently over*, to get hold of the scope of the writer, must certainly be acknowledged rational, and just. But still, perhaps, if Mr. Lock himself had not trusted to his own reason quite so much; but had ventured a little more to look into commentators, and sift their observations with that penetration, of which he was master, he might perhaps have avoided some mistakes, that are laid to his charge; and might on the whole have made a better work.

But on a supposition that Mr. Lock's abilities made a commentator's assistance unnecessary; yet every student must not consider himself in the same light. Many helps may be necessary to him, which were

were not so to Mr. Lock. The commentator's aid, in all places at least, which he does not *clearly understand*, will be of great use to him; and he will often have reason to admire the pains they have taken to seek out the force of words, and figurative expressions—to explain Jewish customs, and ceremonies—to collate one part of scripture with another—to inquire into the meaning of idioms, and proverbial modes of speaking—to explain geographical, and chronological difficulties—and, in short, to render clear, whatever hath gathered obscurity, through a course of time. And can any young student suppose, either, that these inquiries do not tend greatly to elucidate the scriptures?—Or that his own endeavours can be equal to them? Or indeed, that the endeavours of any single person can attain a degree of knowledge, which must rise in perfection from the labours of one improving on another?

No doubt, as the scriptures have been more commented on, than any other books—and as people of all professions, and opinions, and under prejudices of every kind, have laboured in this work, there will of course be many things said on the subject, which had been better unsaid. Nay even the best commentators may have their particular opinions, which may often mislead their interpretations. Let the student therefore, with his best judgment, endeavour to find out, where the commentator trifles—where he refines—or, above all things, where he deviates from common sense; which should always guide our interpretations of scripture. But let him well examine the numberless lights, which their united labours have thrown upon the sacred text, before he venture to condemn them *in the gross*. The scriptures are perhaps better understood now, through the means of able commentators, than they have ever been, since the time of their first publication.

The following work is certainly not intended as a *substitute* to the labours of the many learned men, who have commented on the scriptures; but rather as an *introduction* to them. It is meant to give in a short compass, a *general idea* of what the commentator discusses *at large*. In their works we have the *parts* often ably explained; but rarely a connected view of the *whole*. In the following work this plan hath been reversed. The general sense and connection of the *whole* hath been attended to, without regarding minutely the critical examination of *parts*.

So that the reader may pursue the narrative, or argument without interruption. This endeavour to place the leading subject in the fairest point of light, hath sometimes made me perhaps more concise, than I should otherwise have chosen to be. I wished to avoid what I thought the greatest fault of paraphrasts, that of saying every thing that can be said, and leaving nothing to the reader's observation. Many parts of scripture require no explanation: and a difficult passage is not always difficult, because it is concise. An explanation perhaps need employ no more words than a difficulty. It appeared to me, in short, a useful mode of commenting, to give just the leading sense; which is sometimes lost, or however injured, in a multiplicity of words: while I trust I have left nothing unsaid, except in critical matters, which will not easily strike an observant reader, on looking into the original.—I have sometimes also abridged, where a sentiment or fact is drawn out, according to the Jewish idiom, into repetition; or where a doctrine relates to some ancient error; and is less interesting at this time. But when I over-run a real difficulty, the reader will generally find some account of it in the notes; unless it relate to any nicety of verbal criticism, which I leave to works more professedly written on those subjects. I refer however to each verse in the margin, that the reader may, with ease, apply elsewhere for satisfaction, when he misses it here. A clear, connected discourse, without pausing long at obstacles, hath been chiefly aimed at, which may itself lessen many difficulties; and by throwing a *general* light over the *whole*, make even the *parts* more intelligible. “I am more
 “and more convinced (says a pious, and able expositor) that the vulgar
 “sense of the New Testament, that is, the sense, in which an honest man
 “of plain sense would take it on his first reading it, is almost every where,
 “the true, general sense of any passage: tho’ an acquaintance with lan-
 “guage, and antiquity, with an attentive meditation on the text, and con-
 “text, may illustrate the spirit and energy of a multitude of places*.”

Upon the whole, in this exposition I have endeavoured as nearly as I can, to give the scriptures in *such a dress*, as I humbly, (very humbly,)

* Doddr. fam. Expof. Vol. II. p. 29.

suppose they might have appeared in, if they had been *written originally in English*; and accommodated to the *customs, idioms, and modes of phraseology now in use*; and by giving them this modern cast, I have *attempted* to make the *sense of them*, as familiar to *our ears*, as it was to those of the *early christians*. One great point I have laboured, is to make the connection between the several parts of a discourse, as easy as I can. The Jewish writers, among whom composition was not cultivated as a science, were little attentive to this matter. A train of ideas, no doubt, flowed regularly in their minds; but it is not always obvious to a modern ear, which is used to a more artificial combination. In the writings of St. Paul this abruptness is particularly remarkable. On this point I have taken all the pains I could, and have used the best helps I could find, to shew the connection.

Some writers have undertaken a task, which (I speak with diffidence) appears equally arduous, and unnecessary—that of *harmonizing* the scriptures, by bringing them into agreement in every *minute particular*. That there exists the most harmonious agreement among the evangelical writers, in all the *doctrines of religion*, and in all the circumstances of any consequence in the *history*, every body, who reads the scriptures *candidly*, must acknowledge. But that there are many little contrarieties, in dates, and trifling circumstances; cannot well, I think, be denied. “Indeed if no *transposition* be allowed, (says a very candid harmonizer*), it is absolutely impossible in many passages of gospel-history, to make any consistent harmony of the evangelists at all: as every attentive reader must often have observed.” I am clearly of his opinion. And if it be necessary to allow *transposition* in the evangelists; by a parity of reason other little *contrarities* must be allowed also. In fact, the *unimportant detail* of an action seems below their notice.

I do not mean to insinuate, that every thing in the gospels, which has the appearance of a contradiction, is really such: for many of these seeming contradictions have been happily reconciled. Nor do I mean to insinuate, that none of them are worth the attention of the learned:

* Fam. Expof. Vol. II. p. 616.

for some of them certainly affect the leading facts of the history, and deserve notice. All I mean, is, that when circumstances, (evidently in themselves, and in their connection, *unimportant*;) cannot easily be brought to slide into each other, it is better, I think, to leave them, as of no moment; than to endeavour to draw them together, by forced, and unnatural suppositions. Circumstances indeed of this kind appear so far from injuring the authenticity of these sacred books; that they seem to add a beautiful simplicity to them; and even to give a force to their evidence, which it would not have had, if it had tallied in the minutest particulars.

See how this matter stands in common life. Four witnesses are produced to give their evidence on a fact, which had happened about thirty, or forty years before. This is the exact state of the evangelical evidence. In all the great leading circumstances, which tend to prove the only points, on which the question turns, they are perfectly agreed. In these their memory serves them. They are matters of moment, and have made an impression. In the mean time, with regard to other particulars they vary: but they are such particulars as no way affect the *main question*; and such as, it is evident, the memory of four people cannot equally, nor exactly retain, through so long a period.

But is not this all the evidence you would desire? Does human testimony (which is founded on memory) reach farther? And indeed does not such evidence usually appear even stronger, than when there is a *perfect agreement in every particular*? Is not such trivial exactness the characteristic rather of *collusive*, than of *honest* testimony? Indeed when the fact is *recent*, you expect *more exactness* in the evidence: but I am speaking here only of such evidence, as the apostolic evidence was, when the facts testified, had happened many years before the testimony was given. A captious lawyer indeed might endeavour to take the advantage of these variations; but certainly no sincere inquirer after truth would attempt it.

But the evangelic testimony, you say, is of a different kind. It is not founded on *memory*, but on *inspiration*; and therefore, notwithstanding any lapse of time, should be exact in every particular.

No

No doubt, it would, if that were the case. But who can say how far inspiration extends? The evangelic writers themselves acknowledge, that they often speak on *human authority*. St. Luke, in the beginning of his gospel, expressly says, he wrote such things, as had been *delivered to him by eye-witnesses*. If he had had them from *inspiration*, it was absurd surely to appeal to a *weaker* testimony, when he had a *stronger*. St. Paul also sometimes speaks with *uncertainty*: as when he mentions those persons, whom he had baptized, he adds, *I know not whether I baptized any other**. Sometimes again, he makes a plain distinction between what he says as an *inspired apostle*; and what he says merely as a *man*. Of this we have several instances in the seventh chapter of the first of Corinthians†. He had a contest also with St. Peter about a point in religion, tho no very interesting one. Both however could not be right; and yet, if inspiration had extended universally, we might have expected perfect unanimity.

As the apostolic writers themselves lay no claim to this extent of inspiration; so neither can it be proved, I think, from any part of scripture. We are told indeed that the apostles should be *led into all the truth*; and that *the Spirit should bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said unto them*. But neither of these expressions, nor any other, that I recollect, can fairly be interpreted to mean more, than that the apostles should be restrained by the Holy Spirit from error; and led into the remembrance of all the truths, which their Master had taught them, *as far as religion was concerned*. Divine truth was the only object, that was aimed at. In whatever concerned this, their minds, no doubt, were spiritually illumined. But in other matters, (which were unimportant,) and indeed in all *matters of fact*, which fell under their own eyes, or which they received from just information, their testimony was only the testimony of honest men. And in giving such testimony, I see not why their evidence might not be as fallible in trifling circumstances, (*secured at the same time, from errors of importance,*) as human evidence commonly is, at such a distance of time.—What, is it, for instance, to the truth of religion, whether our Saviour, on crossing the lake of Genesaret, met one demoniac, or two? Or, whether he met them in the country of

* I. Cor. i. 16.

† See the 6th, 10th, 25th, and 40th verses.

the Gaderenes, or of the Gergesenes; which two people were contiguous? The attestation to the truth of the gospel by a miracle, which is the great leading fact, and all that is necessary, is the same in all these cases.—What again signifies it to the truth of religion, whether that noble discourse, which our Saviour gave the people, and which is commonly called the *sermon on the mount*, was really spoken on a *mount*, or on a *plain*? Our Saviour spoke many discourses, no doubt, in both situations: and it might easily escape the narrator's memory, in which of them this particular discourse was spoken. If St. Matthew, and St. Luke had written in concert, they would have taken care, no doubt, to agree in this particular. As they did not write in concert, there happens to be a trifling difference. But is the *main question* affected by it? Is there any difference in the *doctrine*, which the two evangelists delivered from their Master's mouth? This is all that is material; and all, that the Holy Spirit, we may suppose, saw necessary to *bring to their remembrance*.

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* Epist. 376.

of it's proper place: he wants the context to guide his interpretations; and must trust more to the harmonizer's judgment.

Secondly, by explaining the four evangelists separately, the *parts* are not only preserved more distinct; but the *whole* is more uniform. It seems difficult to blend the *four* gospels into *one well-arranged* narrative. It is *impossible* without many *barb'd suppositions*. St. Luke, for instance, gives us many parables, and historical passages, of which none of the other evangelists take notice; and yet St. Luke gives us no circumstances to establish their chronological order. How, and where are they to be introduced? We may call it *harmonizing*, if we please, when we blend them with the other evangelists: but it is certainly a very forced, and arbitrary mode of connecting. Several parallel passages also agree so ill, that we must necessarily suppose some little variation, or we must suppose them separate narrations, which often gives a great awkwardness to the whole. The account for instance, which the four evangelists * give of Simon's supper, are so different; that all of them cannot well be interwoven together: and yet, if we conceive them with the generality of interpreters, two different events, it is somewhat difficult to suppose, that Jesus was invited twice to supper by two different people of the name of Simon—that at each supper a woman came in with an alabaſter box of precious ointment—that she twice anointed him—that the same persons were present on both occasions—and that some of the very same observations were made.

Lastly, the evangelical proof appears with *more force*, when four witnesses come forward; and each separately gives his evidence (evidence given on record, at different places, and in different times,) without the least *material* variation. We have hence certainly that strong, that irresistible proof, which no *blended narrative*, or *systemized testimony*, can give. This is the order, and mode, in which it hath pleased God to exhibit the evidence of the gospel; and we may therefore take it for granted, it was the best.

* Mat. xxvi. 6.—Mark xiv. 3.—Luke vii. 26.—John xii. 1.

I shall just add to this preface a few explanations of persons and things, which occur frequently in scripture.

The *Samaritans* were originally heathen, settled by the king of Assyria, after the captivity, in the Israelitish cities. Many of the ten tribes, afterwards returning, incorporated with them, in their old habitations: and thus, by degrees the Samaritans became a body of spurious Jews. They received the pentateuch; but there was still a great mixture of heathenism in their religion: and the native Jews entertained an unbounded hatred towards them.

A *Scribe* was a general name, among the Jews for a *public teacher*; tho he is sometimes also known in scripture by the name of a *lawyer*. St. Luke particularly makes this distinction; calling the former γραμματευσ; and the latter νομικος, or νομοδιδασκαλος. The Scribes, in general, were of the sect of the Pharisees; and conversant, like them, in traditions. On our Saviour's appearance in public, they began to lose their influence with the people, who observed, that Jesus taught them *as one having authority, and not as the Scribes*.

The *Herodians* seem to have been rather a political, than a religious sect. They were the espousers of Herod's maxims; and under his influence supported the Roman power. In religious principles, it is supposed, they were chiefly Sadducees*.

Of the Jewish festivals, the most distinguished, was the *Passover*; which lasted seven days. It was instituted in commemoration of the angel's *passing over* the houses of the Israelites, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. It is called also in scripture the feast of *unleavened bread*.

The next great festival was the *Pentecost*; which lasted only one day; taking it's name from being celebrated fifty days after the Passover. It was instituted in remembrance of the giving of the law. We sometimes also find this festival called the *feast of harvest*, from the season when it was celebrated: and also the *feast of weeks*, from it's being numbered by weeks after the passover.

* Compare Mat. xvi. 6, with Mark viii. 15.

The third great festival was the *feast of Tabernacles*, which lasted seven days; and was observed in the time of vintage. It was the annual record of that mode of dwelling, which the children of Israel had used in travelling through the wilderness; and preserved the remembrance of the great deliverances they experienced at that time.—All these great festivals were appointed by the law to be celebrated at Jerusalem; whither the whole nation was enjoined to repair.

Every seventh day was a *sabbath*: every seventh year a *sabbatical year*; and every fiftieth year, a *Jubilee*.—The Jews also observed the feast of the *New-moon*; which was celebrated on the first new-moon of the year. This feast was called also the *feast of Trumpets*, from the mode of it's being proclaimed.—We read also of two other feasts among the Jews; tho both of human institution; the *feast of Purim*; and the *feast of the Dedication*. The former was instituted in remembrance of the delivery of the people by Esther: the latter was appointed by Judas Macabeus in honour of cleansing the temple, after the pollutions of Antiochus.

Several fasts also were observed among the Jews, both annually, and on particular occasions: but none of them were of divine institution, except the *great day of atonement*, which was observed between the feasts of Pentecost, and Tabernacles. On that day the high-priest entered the Holy of Holies, to make expiation for his own sins, and the sins of the people: and on that day also the ceremony of the azazel, or scape-goat, was performed.

The Jewish division of time also is often mentioned in scripture.—The day was divided into four parts. The first part, beginning at six, ended at nine; which being a space of three hours, nine o'clock was called the third hour. The second part, beginning at nine, ended at twelve, which was called the sixth hour. The third part, beginning at twelve, ended at three; which was called the ninth hour; and the fourth part, beginning at three, ended at six; which of course became the twelfth hour.—The night was divided into four watches; the evening-watch; the middle-watch; the cock-crowing; and the morning-watch.

END OF THE GENERAL PREFACE.

T H E
L I F E
O F
J E S U S C H R I S T,
DRAWN FROM THE
PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE life of Christ, as recorded by the evangelists, cannot, I think, be introduced better, than by the same life, as we have it delineated in the Old Testament. In this great receptacle of divine truth are contained three modes of prophetic evidence; each of them characterizing the Messiah.

The first is contained in the *history of the Jews*; from the earliest period of it, till their settlement in Canaan. Here the resemblance, tho in some parts faint, may be generally traced.—God's call of Abraham from an idolatrous country, if not a type, was at least a close representation of the gracious call of mankind by Christ, from the pollutions of the world: and that faith, by which the patriarch was led through all the difficulties of his travels, was precisely that faith, which Christ requires from us in passing through a state of trial. For this we have

St. Paul's authority*.—The miraculous birth of Isaac, the child of promise, was a type of the birth of Christ; as his sacrifice was of Christ's death.—The bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt was a lively representation of the bondage of sin, from which Christ delivered us: and Moses as a deliverer, was a type of Christ. He himself alludes to it, when he tells the people, that *God should raise unto them a prophet, like unto him*†: that is, a deliverer as he had been.—The travels of the children of Israel through the wilderness were productive of many prophetic events. Their miraculous supply of food from heaven—their thirst quenched with water from a rock, which St. Paul tells us was an emblem of Christ‡—and the lifting up of the brazen serpent, which our Saviour himself mentions as a representation of his crucifixion||—may all be called *historical prophecies* of different parts of the christian dispensation.—Lastly, after this probationary travel through the wilderness was over, the settlement of the Jews in the land of promise under Joshua, is represented in scripture, as a type of the christian's rest in a state of happiness, through Christ§.

Another mode of *prophetic evidence* contained in the books of the Old Testament, is wonderfully displayed in the various ceremonies of the Jewish church, after it's perfect establishment. Almost every one of these ceremonies pointed strongly to Christ.—But there is something here rather singular. The *history* of the Jews, we see, presents a typical representation of the *whole scheme* of our redemption: whereas the *rites, and ceremonies* of the Jewish church are confined almost intirely to that one great *end* of it, the atonement, which Christ made by his death for the sins of mankind. Thus the sacrifices of the temple, in all their various kinds, set forth, in different views, the shedding of his sacred blood, and that expiation for sin, which it was intended to make. The scape-goat, which was sent into the wilderness, after the sins of the people had been confessed over it, represented the same great end. The passover, tho primarily instituted in remembrance of the angel's passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he slew the first-born of the Egyptians, had refer-

* See Gal. iii. 6, 7.

† Deut. xviii. 15.

‡ I. Cor. x. 4.

|| John iii. 14.

§ Heb. iv. 1—12.

rence also to that great paschal lamb, which was slain for the sins of mankind. The veil of the temple, which separated the Holy of Holies from the other parts of the temple, shewed it's connection, at the time of Christ's death, with that great event. The partition wall between the Jews, and Gentiles, was then broken down.—The high-priest entering the Holy of Holies to make atonement for his own sins, and the sins of the people, respected plainly, that great intercession, which was afterwards to be made by Christ. Many other typical representations might be insisted on.

The third mode of *prophetic evidence*, is that, which arises from *verbal prophecy*. This is by far the most extensive, and the most determined; concentring in itself both the others. It is this only, which I mean at present to consider as an introduction to the evangelical life of Christ: and in order to place it in the strongest point of light, I shall collect from the whole mass of prophecy those predictions only, which appertain the *most evidently* to the life; and death, and functions of the Messiah: and I shall rather arrange them in the order of time, in which they were *completed*; than in the order of time, in which they were *uttered*.

But before I produce these prophecies, it may be proper to say a few words in answer to some objections, that have been made to them. And tho these objections have been fully answered by learned men, it is not proper to leave them here wholly untouched.—It hath been said particularly, that *there is much heterogeneous matter mixed with the prophecies of the Old Testament, so as greatly to obscure them*;—and, that the Jews themselves, who ought to be best acquainted with their own scriptures, do not apply the prophetic parts of them to Christ, in the manner we christians do.

With regard to the first objection, that *there is much heterogeneous matter mixed with the prophecies, so as greatly to obscure them*; it is true: and free-thinkers have sometimes amused themselves, by making centos of prophecies from Homer, and Virgil, and other authors. But a jest is no argument; nor a *general resemblance, a proper likeness*. To find out *general resemblances* among things, is one of the easiest offices of invention. If the free-thinker can produce from Homer and Virgil, such a series of passages applicable to the life, and death of the Messiah, as may be produced

duced from the writings of the Old Testament; I should be inclined to receive Homer and Virgil among the prophets. If not, the jest recoils upon the jester.—Let us then candidly examine the objection, by shewing first the *manner*, in which prophetic notices are conveyed; and secondly, the *propriety* of that manner.—The prophet, generally takes a handle from some occasion, (on which he is consulted; or on which he encourages, exhorts, or threatens,) to carry the view beyond the primary idea; and to mix with it some circumstance, relating to the kingdom of the Messiah. Thus when Isaiah was sent to Ahaz in his distress on the rumour of an invasion from the two kings of Syria and Israel, he carried, by the command of God, his infant son with him, as a sign to Ahaz. Ostensible signs were a common medium in the east, both of prophecy, and instruction. He informed the king therefore, that before the child he held in his arms, should learn to distinguish one thing from another, the land should be delivered from the two kings, of whom he was in dread. But immediately fired with the prophetic spirit, from the view of one child he proceeds to another; and breaks out into that noble prophecy of Immanuel, who was to be the means of a still greater deliverance; of which that from the two kings was the type only, or sign*.—Thus again, the prophet Zechariah, being sent to the Jewish rulers, warns them, under the idea of bad shepherds, of their approaching ruin; and presenting himself as a shepherd, asks what price they will give him? On their offering him thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, he throws the money in contempt to a potter, then at work near the temple. By this sign, or action, he shews the Jews, how contemptuously they should hereafter estimate the great shepherd, whom God should send among them; breaking, at the same time, his pastoral

* Isaiah vii. There is some difficulty in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth verses of this chapter, in which the prophecy is contained. The two children seem to be confounded; that, which was to be a *sign to Ahaz*, with that, which was to be a *sign to the house of David*. But the whole is rendered easy by some such explication as this, which the original warrants.—V. 14. Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (V. 15) He shall be brought up, as children commonly are, *till* his reason begin to open. (V. 16) But before *this* child (my infant son, which I hold in my arms) shall come to the use of his reason, the deliverance from the two kings, which I predict, shall be effected.

slaves, as a sign that all covenant between God, and the Jews should be broken.—Thus then the prophet usually mixes some *future blessing* relative to the Messiah's kingdom, with the temporal blessing which was the *immediate object* of his discourse—or some *future threat*, of which that *immediately impending*, was only the sign. The *occasion* therefore becomes merely the *vehicle* of the prophecy: and, I apprehend, not only so in the greater prophecies, in which the light shines strongly and forcibly; but in what may be called the coruscations of prophecy—those transient, accidental rays, which are continually shooting out on various occasions; and yet are capable of being collected into a strong light.—Let us now suppose the prophet, instead of involving his prediction in this obscurity, and taking the occasion that offered, had uttered his prophecy in set form, and in *plain historic language*; what would have been the consequence? Certainly they, whose interest it was, would have taken every measure to counteract the prophecy: and the providence of God, in order to bring about the completion of it, must have upheld it by a constant series of miracles, to thwart, and oppose all the various schemes, which would be laid by designing men to counteract it. Whereas the prophecy *veiled in this obscure form*, was often compleated by those *very persons*, who wished *least* to see it compleated; and who in fact never knew that it *was compleated* till the completion *stared them in the face*. While at the same time, in it's obscure form it answered all the ends of prophecy to those who were well-disposed. Tho *shining in a dark place*, it gave light sufficient to *raise the hopes* of the devout worshipper with a *distant view* of the Messiah; and when fulfilled, it *confirmed his faith*.

But still, with regard to the second objection, one should suppose that the Jews must have understood *their own* scriptures better than any other interpreters; and we are told they do not interpret them as we do.—Now indeed they do not. They have changed their ground. But *formerly* they did. All the Jews, of whom there were great numbers, who embraced the christian religion, universally did it on the strength of these prophecies. And that the Jewish nation, in general, interpreted the prophecies in this way, appears plain from the many false Christs, and false prophets, who were continually at that time arising to answer the ideas of the people by fulfilling the prophecies; tho they became instrumentally

strumentally the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem, by irritating the Romans, through their frequent rebellions. Indeed it is impossible to conceive, that the evangelical writers could quote, and apply the prophecies in the *familiar manner* they did, if they had not been well assured, they applied them in that sense, which was *at that time* the commonly received one. To this day indeed many of the Jews interpret most of the prophecies of the Messiah, as we do; but will not allow the completion of them. Others, who cannot fully deny their force, have recourse to two Messiahs, a *suffering*, and a *triumphant* one. In short, the Jews say as little as they can say, when they must say something, or else be Jews no longer. Among all the opponents of christianity the Jews certainly oppose the prophecies of the Messiah with the worst grace. While they continue a dispersed, wandering people, one should wonder with what face they can deny, that Shiloh was come. In the *present state* of the Jewish people, the prophecies *could not* be fulfilled. There is now no temple left for the glory of the Messiah to fill—no Sanhedrim to oppose him. Where is Beth-lem Ephratah? Can even the very family of David be now pointed out, so as to ascertain the Messiah's birth? Besides, almost all the world, even the Mahomedan part of it, profess their belief now in one God. The world must again change it's object of worship, and become idolatrous, before the *Jewish Messiah*, according to prophecy, can appear.—Lastly, the very *opposition* of the Jews themselves adds strength to the cause they wish to oppose: for it is one of the prophetic marks of the truth of the christian religion, (and the evangelists apply it as such,) that the Jews, *as a nation*, should reject the Messiah—that they should *bear, but not understand*—that they should *see, but not perceive*—that their *eyes should be darkened*; and their *ears shut*—that they should reject the *head-stone of the corner*—and that God, according to the representation of the prophet Isaiah, *should all day long stretch forth his hands towards a disobedient, and a gain-saying people*.

I trust that even from this slight examination of these two objections against prophecy, it will appear, there is little force in either of them. At the same time, it is true, that all the prophecies are not equally clear even to christians themselves. All that I have collected, I believe, are *commonly* interpreted of the Messiah; and cannot be applied to any person but Christ. That amazing combination particularly of *meanness*, and *dignity*; of *suffering*, and

and *exaltation*, which are among the leading ideas of these prophecies; so apparently contradictory, and yet so wonderfully exact, form an argument, I think, too strong to be easily resisted. After all, however, if a few of these quotations be not deemed by some to be of a prophetic cast; we resign them: a sufficient number, we trust, will still remain, to make out the proof abundantly convincing.

I have divided the whole collection into four sections.—The first exhibits a series of those prophecies, which contain the *earliest*, and most *remote* intimations of the Messiah. They are dark, it is true: but as they plainly appear to *center in one point*, they illustrate each other. Each prophecy, *considered apart*, might be called obscure; but the whole series *in combination* emits certainly a very splendid light. They begin with predicting a *victory*, and an *everlasting covenant*, which was to take place *between God, and all the nations of the earth*. Under the ideas of a *tree*, and a *mountain*, they hold out the *grandeur*, and *dignity* of the Messiah's kingdom; and in a variety of beautiful images, in which all nature is represented in harmony, and the wild beasts of the forest tamed, they exhibit that peace, and happiness, and universal change in the manners of men, which this glorious, predicted reign was meant to introduce; disclosing, at the same time, throughout, its *spiritual nature*, and the *transcendent joy*, with which it ought to be received.

In the second section are exhibited those prophecies, which relate to the *birth* of the Messiah. Here the prophetic language becomes more distinct, and full. Those *general* intimations, which were given before, begin now to *break*, and *particularize*. The same lineaments appear; but the features are more distinctly marked. The section opens with predicting the *fore-runner of the Messiah*, in the person of John the baptist. The prophecies of the Messiah's *birth* succeed; and the wonderful peculiarity of his being *born of a virgin*. The *place* of his nativity is specified; and the *characteristics* of his office, and the *nature* of his government, are strongly marked.

In the third section I have collected such prophecies, as appertain to the Messiah's *life*. The whole plan of it indeed is specified with as much precision as the figurative language, in which these predictions
f are

are clothed, is able to convey. He is represented as arrayed in the dignity of a *prophet*, like Moses; and of a *priest* like Melchizedec. At the same time, his *mean*, and *suffering state* on earth is strongly characterized. His *gentleness*, and *holiness*; the great efficacy of his *preaching*; the *offence* he gave to worldly men; his repressing the *spirit of worldly wisdom*; his *triumphant entry* into Jerusalem; and his *divine presence* in the temple; are all distinctly held out. The *variety*, and even the *kind*, of his *miracles* are specified; and his *pastoral care* is strongly represented by images highly expressive of tenderness, and affection.

In the last section, I have collected such prophecies, as appertain to the *death* of Christ. Here the prophetic spirit, as if imagery failed in describing the last scenes of this awful life, descends from it's lofty flights, and marks the several circumstances of that solemn period in the plainest terms; but marks them also with almost historical precision. From his being *betrayed* by one of his disciples, to his *resurrection*, there is scarce a single circumstance, which one, or other of the prophetic writers hath not mentioned. The bargain made for *thirty pieces* of silver—the *dispersion of the disciples* on the seizing of Jesus—the particulars of his *trial*—the *false witnesses*, that appeared against him—the usage of the *soldiers*—the *mode* of his death—the *behaviour of his enemies* during that awful period—the *time* of that great event—the *end*, and *intention* of it—the *manner* of his *burial*—and his *triumphant resurrection*—all appear to be so exactly conformable to the history of the New Testament, that we might almost think them plain transcripts from it, if we had not the very best historical evidence, that they were all written, published, and well known, many hundred years—the latest of them above four hundred—before the birth of Christ.

SECTION I.

Containing the earliest intimations of the Messiah.

- Gen. iii. 15. I will put enmity, between thee (said God to the serpent) and the woman—between thy seed, and her seed. It shall bruise thy head; and
 Gen. xvii. 7. thou shalt bruise his heel.—I will establish my covenant (said God to Abraham)

- Abraham) between thee and me; and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*.—Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an *everlasting covenant*; and with his seed after him. And in thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed.—I will perform the oath (said God to Isaac) which I swore unto Abraham thy father; and in thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed.—In thee, and in thy seed, (said God to Jacob) shall *all the families* of the earth be blessed.—And it shall come to pass (said God to David,) when thy days shall be expired, and thou shalt go to thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons: and I will settle him in mine house *for ever*, and his *throne shall be established for evermore*.—
- If. xlii. 6. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness: I will keep thee; and give thee for a *covenant* to the people; for a *light of the Gentiles*.—Thus saith the Lord, I will give thee for a *covenant of the people*—to establish the earth—to cause to *inherit* the *desolate* heritages.—Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be days, and nights in their seasons—then may also my *covenant* be broken with my servant David, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne.—There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse; and a branch shall go out of his roots; and the *Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him*; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.—Behold the day is come, saith the
- Gen. xvii. 19.
Gen. xxii. 18.
Gen. xxvi. 3.
Gen. xxviii. 14.
I Chron. xvii. 11.
If. xlii. 6.
If. xlix. 8.
Jer. xxxiii. 20.
If. xi. 1. 2.
Jer. xxiii. 5.

I. Chron. xvii. 11. This seems to have been *immediately* spoken of Solomon; who was considered as a type of Christ: but the prophetic characters are evidently carried beyond a prince, from whose *immediate successor* the kingdom was rent.

Ifa. xlii. 6; and xlix. 8. If the context be examined, the whole is evidently prophetic of the Messiah: but I wished here only to retain such passages, as referred to the covenant.

Jer. xxxiii. 20. From this prophecy also that part only is taken, which belongs to the covenant. It could have no respect *personally* to David, or his *immediate* posterity; for it was spoken five hundred years after David's death.

Jer. xxiii. 5. Here again the same successor is promised to David five hundred years after the death of that prince; which promise had been made before to the Patriarchs, and to that prince himself.

- Lord, that I will raise unto David a *righteous branch*, and a king shall reign, and prosper, and shall execute judgment, and justice on the earth. In his days *Judah shall be saved*; and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord our righteousness*.—In those days will I cause the *Branch of righteousness* to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment, and righteousness in the land.—Thus saith the Lord God, I will take the highest branch of the highest cedar; and I will plant it on a high mountain; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit: and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all the fowls of every wing: in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.—Hear now O Joshua, the high priest, thou, and thy fellows, that sit before thee: Behold I will bring forth my servant the Branch—Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Behold the man whose name is the Branch; he shall grow up out of his place: and he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory: and he shall sit, and rule upon his throne.—
- Jer. xxxiii. 15. In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the people shall flow into it.—The Lord shall reign over them in mount Sion, from henceforth, even for ever.—
- Ezek. xvii. 22. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established; and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it.—And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people; and the veil, that is spread over all nations.—And many shall say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord; to the house of the God of Jacob: he will teach us his ways; and we will walk in his paths: for out of Sion shall go forth the law; and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: and he shall judge among the nations; and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not rise against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.—The wolf also shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead
- Zech. iii. 8. Mic. iv. 1. Mic. iv. 7. Is. ii. 2. Is. xxv. 7. Is. ii. 3. Is. xi. 6.

Is. xxv. 7. There is something extremely grand in thus representing the gospel as removing the darkness spread over all nations by the drawing up of a vast curtain, to let in the light.

them.

- them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp; and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. And they shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an *ensign to the people*. To it shall the *Gentiles seek*: and *his rest* shall be glorious.—The scepter shall not depart from Judah; nor a lawgiver from between his feet, *until Shiloh come*: and unto him shall the *gathering of the people* be.—There shall come ^{17.} *a Star* out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel.—I will also give thee for *a light to the Gentiles*, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the *ends of the earth*.—I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven; and came to the Ancient of days. And there was given unto him *dominion*, and *glory*, and *a kingdom*, that *all people, nations, and languages*, should serve him. *His dominion is an everlasting dominion*, which shall not pass away; and
- Gen. xlix. 10. *his kingdom*, that which *shall not be destroyed*.—Behold I will give to
- Numb. xxiv. *Jerusalem one*, that bringeth good tidings—O Sion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength. Lift it up. Be not afraid.
- Is. xlix. 6. *Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God*.—Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath *comforted his people*: and will have mercy on his afflicted.—
- Is. xli. 27.
- Is. xl. 9.
- Dan. vii. 13.
- Is. xlix. 13.

Gen. xlix. 10. Some have objected that this prophecy was fulfilled in Moses. But what scepter had Judah before Moses? The word *Shiloh* signifies *sent*; and was always interpreted by the ancient Jews of the Messiah. It is supposed indeed by many interpreters, that Moses himself alluded to this prophecy, when he expresses his backwardness to God in going to Pharaoh. *Send I pray thee by the hand of him, whom thou wilt send*—that is by the *Shiloh*, whom thou hast promised. How very exactly this prophecy was fulfilled, is very apparent. The dispersion of the Jews, independent of prophecy, is one of the most singular events in the history of mankind: but when we consider it as the completion of prophecy—when we consider this people dispersed; and wandering among all the nations upon earth—without temples—without laws, without government—connected with none; but distinct from all—as if preserved to compleat future prophecies—the whole together, I think, forms an argument of sufficient force to weigh against all the cavils of infidelity.

Unto

Mal. iv. 2. Unto you that fear my name, shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

SECTION II.

Containing those prophecies, which relate to the birth of the Messiah.

- If. xl. 3. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord*, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain, and hill, shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.—I will send my messenger; and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple—even the messenger of the covenant ye delight in. Behold he will come with the Lord of hosts.—I have set my king upon my holy hill of Sion. Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance; and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.
- Mal. iv. 5.
- Mal. iii. 1.
- Pf. ii. 6.
- If. vii. 14.—The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.—And thou, Bethlem Ephratah, tho thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth, who is to be the ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old; from everlasting.—The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the
- Mic. v. 2.
- If. ix. 2.

If. xl. iii. By *mountains*, and *rough ways*, the prophet indicates the moral difficulties, which the gospel tended to remove.

Pf. ii. 6. This prophecy of the *heathen*, and the *utmost parts of the earth as a possession*, is, in other language the old patriarchal promise, *in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*.

mighty

mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government, and peace, there shall be no end.

S E C T I O N III.

Containing those prophecies, which relate to the life of the Messiah—his preaching, and his miracles.

- Deut. xviii. 18. I will raise them a prophet from among their brethren (said God to Moses) *like unto thee*; and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them *all that I shall command*.—He hath no *form, nor comeliness*; and when we shall see him, there is no *beauty* that we should desire him. He is *despised and rejected* of men—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was *despised*, and we esteemed him not.—He shall not cry, nor *cause his voice to be heard in the streets*. A bruised reed shall he not break; and smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment with truth.—How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings—that *publisheth peace*—that *publisheth salvation*—that faith unto Sion, *thy God reigneth*.—Sing, and rejoice, O daughter of Sion; for lo! I come; and will dwell in the midst of thee. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day; and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know, that the Lord hath sent me unto thee.—Behold my Servant, whom I have chosen—mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not be discouraged, till he have set judgment on the earth; and the isles shall
- If. liii. 2.
- If. xlii. 2.
- If. lii. 7.
- Zech. ii. 10.
- If. xlii. 10.

Deut. xviii. 18. That no prophet ever did arise in Israel, *like unto Moses*, is taken notice of by Samuel, or whoever added the concluding part to the pentateuch. See Deut. xx. 10. The great leading characters in Moses, is his *delivering Israel*, and *introducing a new law*. These characters agree only in the Messiah. The great difference was, that his *deliverance*, and his *law* were *universal*, and *perpetual*; those of Moses *local*, and *transitory*.

If. xlii. 2. This prophecy sets the mildness, and quietness of the Messiah in opposition to the severe, and spirited character of the prophets.

wait

- If. xi. 3. *wait for his law.*—He shall not judge after the *sight of his eyes*, neither reprove after the *hearing of his ears*; but with *righteousness shall he judge the poor*; and *reprove with equity*: and he shall smite the earth with the *rod of his mouth*; and with the *breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked*†. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins; and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.—The *Spirit of the Lord* is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to *preach good tidings* unto the meek. He hath sent me to *bind up the broken-hearted*—to proclaim *liberty to the captives*, and the *opening of the prison* unto them that are *bound*—to proclaim the *acceptable year of the Lord*.—And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the *mountain of the Lord*, and to the *house of the God of Jacob*; and he will teach you *his ways*, and we will walk in *his paths*: for the *Lord shall go forth out of Sion*, and the *word of the Lord from Jerusalem*.—
- If. viii. 14. He shall be a *stone of stumbling*, and a *rock of offence* to both the *houses of Israel*.—This is the *Lord's doing*; and it is marvellous in our eyes.
- Pf. cxviii. 22. This is the *day*, which the *Lord* hath made; we will rejoice, and be glad.—Behold I lay in *Sion, a foundation-stone*; a tried stone; a precious corner-stone; a sure foundation; he that *believeth*, shall not be confounded.
- If. xxix. 14. —I will do a marvellous work among this people. The *wisdom of their wise men shall perish*; and the *understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*.—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of *Sion*. Shout, O daughter of *Jerusalem*. Behold thy king cometh unto thee. He is just; and having salvation; lowly; and *riding upon an ass*, and a colt the foal of an ass. I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The *glory of this latter house* shall be greater than the *former*; and in *this place* will I give *peace*, saith the Lord of hosts.—Then shall the *eyes of the blind* be opened, and the *ears of the deaf* shall be unstopped. Then shall the *lame man* leap as a hart; and the *tongue of the dumb man* shall sing.
- If. xlii. 7. —He shall bring out the *prisoners*, and them that sit in *darkness*, out

* That is, he shall not take cognizance of actions from his senses; nor according to outward appearance.

† That is, the doctrine which he preaches shall make the eternal separation of good, and bad.

If. xxxv. 5. It is observed, that no prophet wrought such miracles, as these; but Christ.

If. xlii. 7. The idea of a prison, and prisoners, is very often applied to a state of heathenism.

- If. xlix. 9. of the prison-house. He shall say to the *prisoners*, Go forth; to them
 If. xl. 11. that sit in *darkness*, Shew yourselves.—He shall *feed his flocks* like a
 shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with his arms; and carry them
 If. xlix. 10. in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.—They
 shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat, nor the sun smite
 them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them: even by the
 springs of water shall he guide them. They shall feed in the ways; and
 their pasture shall be in all high places.

S E C T I O N IV.

Containing such prophecies as relate to the *death, resurrection, and exaltation* of the
 Messiah.

- Pf. xli. 9. Yea, even mine own *familiar friend*, in whom I trusted; who did
 Zech. xi. 12. also eat of my bread, hath laid great *wait* for me.—And I said, If ye
 think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed
 for my price *thirty pieces of silver*, and I cast them to the potter in the
 Zech. xiii. 7. house of the Lord.—*Smite the shepherd*, and the *sheep* shall be *scattered*.
 If. liii. 7. —He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he *opened not his mouth*;
 he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers
 is *dumb*, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison, and
 Pf. xxxv. 11. from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?—False witnesses
 did rise up against me; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.
 Pf. xxxviii. As for me, I was like a deaf man, and heard not; and as one that is dumb,
 Pf. xxii. ^{13.} 16. and doth not open his mouth.—Many *dogs* are come about me, and
 If. l. 6. the counsel of the wicked hath inclosed me.—I gave my *back to the*
smilers, and my *cheeks* to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my
 Mic. v. 1. face from shame and *spitting*.—They shall *smite* the judge of Israel
 Pf. lxix. 21. with a *rod upon the cheek*.—They gave me *gall* to eat; and when I was
 Pf. xxii. 17. thirsty, they gave me *vinegar* to drink. They *pierced my hands* and my

Pf. xxii. 16. This prophecy is descriptive of the Messiah's being put into the hands of
 the *heathen*. The word *dog* was universally applied by the Jews to the heathen. Thus
 our Saviour too applies it. See Matt. xv. 26.

feet. They parted my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.—

Zech. xiii. 6. And one shall say, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those, with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.—

Pf. xxii. 1. My God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me?—All they that go by laugh me to scorn: they shoot out their lips; and shake their heads saying, He trusted in God to deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him.—

Joel ii. 30. I will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great, and terrible day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on

Dan. ix. 24. the name of the Lord, shall be saved.—Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore, and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seventy weeks; and three-score and two weeks the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.

If. liii. 4. —Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgression; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief. Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. He hath poured out his soul unto death. He was numbered with the transgressors; and he shall bear the sins of many; and make intercession

Zech. xii. 10. for transgressors:—And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications: and they shall look upon him, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn

Ex. xii. 46. for him, as one mourneth for an only son.—A bone of him shall not be

Zech. xiii. 1. broken.—In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and for uncleanness.—

If. liii. 9. He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.—

Why

- Pf. ii. 1. Why do the heathen so furiously rage together? The kings of the earth stand up; the *rulers take counsel against the Lord*, and against his *anointed*—He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn. The
- Pf. xvi. 11. Lord shall have them in derision.—Thou shalt not leave my *soul* in
- Hof. vi. 2. *hell*; neither shalt thou suffer thine *holy One* to see *corruption*.—After two days he will revive us, on the *third day* he will *raise us up*, and we
- Job xix. 25. will live in his sight.—I know that my *redeemer liveth*, and that he
- Hof. xiii. 14. shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.—I will ransom *them from the power of the grave*: I will *redeem* them from *death*. O death, I will
- Pf. cx. 1. be thy plague: O grave, I will be thy destruction.—The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion: be thou ruler even in the midst of thine enemies. In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings with a holy worship. The Lord sware, and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.

I shall conclude this whole collection of prophecies with an excellent passage from Bishop Hurd's sermons on prophecy.

“ The argument from prophecy lies merely in the evidence produced, that certain passages were delivered in the Old Testament; and have been fulfilled by certain correspondent events related in the New. The argument doth in no degree depend on faith; but is calculated to produce it. It is equally strong, or equally weak, to a

Hof. vi. 2. In this passage, and in others, the prophets speak in the plural: but it was a common idea to consider Christ as rising, accompanied with all the faithful. Thus St. Paul: *If we believe that Jesus died and rose again; even so them which sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him.*

Pf. cx. 1. The whole psalm from whence this passage is taken, is commonly contrasted with the twenty-second, which contains a full prophecy of the *humiliation* of Christ; as this does of his *exaltation*. They are both quoted in this light frequently by our Saviour, and his apostles.—The 72d and 89th psalms seem to relate to the *establishment of the Messiah's kingdom*. They are full of expressions, which cannot possibly relate to David; or to any other subject.

“ Christian, a Jew, or even an unbeliever—the sole point in question
“ being this, whether such things, as were prophetically delivered, ap-
“ pear to have been fulfilled—a point, on which common sense, and
“ common honesty will equally decide, on every supposition.”

Sermon V. p. 154.

END OF THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.

P R E F A C E

T O

ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

WE know nothing certain of the history of St. Matthew, but what he himself, and the other evangelists, relate; which includes little more, than what passed during our Saviour's ministry. Where he lived afterwards—where he suffered martyrdom—or whether he suffered martyrdom at all—we have no accounts, that can be depended on.

Some commentators, both ancient and modern, are of opinion, that he wrote in Hebrew; and that the Greek we now have, is a translation. But Dr. Lardner, on examining all the evidence, that hath been produced on both sides, is of opinion, that St. Matthew's gospel was most probably written in Greek*.

This gospel is certainly the most circumstantial account we have, of the transactions of our blessed Saviour. It hath also another advantage over St. Mark's gospel, and St. Luke's—it was written by an eye-witness. It is therefore deservedly placed at the head of the sacred cannon; and, I should think, hath a fairer title, than any other, to be the guide in all those little variations, which we find among the evangelists.

One of the great peculiarities of this evangelist, is, the constant attention he pays to the completion of those prophecies, which respected our blessed Saviour.

* See Lardner's Hist. of the apostles, and evangelists.

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ST. MATTHEW.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
11. 12. 13.
14. 15. 16.
17. 18. 19.

THE circumstances, which attended the birth of Jesus Christ, who sprang in a direct line from David, were these.

Joseph, who had been betrothed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, found her with child before their marriage: but being a compassionate man, and unwilling to treat her with severity, he determined to break his engagements with her as privately as he could.

While his thoughts were employed on this subject, it pleased God to reveal to him in a vision the whole mysterious event of

1. *The book of the generations of Jesus Christ.* This phrase does not apply merely to the genealogy, but also to the *life and history* of Christ, as in Gen. vi. 9. *these are the generations of Noah*; under which title is exhibited his history as well as *family*.

1. The prophecies which declare Jesus to be the son of David, are sufficiently fulfilled, if Joseph, his *reputed and legal father*, sprang from that prince. And this, indeed seems to have been the idea of the angel, in his speech to Joseph, in which there is something emphatical, *Joseph THOU SON OF DAVID fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.*—But for further satisfaction with regard to the pedigree of Jesus, see the notes on Luke ii. 4. and Luke iii. 23. The posterity of David reigned in Judea, till the Babylonish captivity. After that event, the family of that prince fell into the utmost obscurity. Still however they preserved their pedigree, as all Jewish families did. The government after the return of the Jews from Babylon, fell into the hands of the priests, and the Maccabees; till Herod the Edomite was made king of Judea by the Romans.

18. Christ in Greek, signifies *anointed*, as *Messiah* does in Hebrew.

19. The Jewish law considered incontinence in a betrothed woman, in the light of adultery, and punished it with death.

B

this

CHAP.

II.

I.

this holy birth; and to point out to him as a confirmation of what had been revealed, the prophecy of Isaiah; *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, who shall be called Immanuel, or, God with man.*

Joseph, thus convinced of her innocence, and high exaltation, received her joyfully; but did not marry her, till after the birth of her son; whom he named Jesus.

This extraordinary birth was published by the following event. Certain eastern Magi came to Jerusalem; and inquired for the king of the Jews, who was then just born; declaring they had seen a star in their own country, which directed them to Judea.

The jealousy of Herod, who reigned over the Jews at that time, was excited by so uncommon an inquiry. He called the chief-priests therefore together; and having been instructed by them, from the

23. Isaiah vii. 14. This verse, and the following, according to our translation, are inserted as a remark of the evangelist's; but they are evidently a continuation of the angel's discourse.

1. In many parts of Persia, and Arabia, colleges of Magi were settled, who studied astronomy, and other sciences, and devoted themselves to a purer religion, than was observed by any of their heathen neighbours. In these colleges many of the Jews resided during the captivity. For the Magi adored one invisible God, and probably made no objection to the Jewish mode of worship. Daniel was certainly at the head of some institution of this kind; (Dan. v. 11.) and Elymas, who is improperly called a *forcerer*, was a Jewish Magus (Acts, xiii. 6.) Many learned men therefore have thought, that the Magi here mentioned, were probably Jews, or however Jewish profelytes.

2. If the *star* was the appearance of that divine light, which the Jews called the *Shekinah*, it was a sign well adapted to *them*. If it had really the *appearance of a star*, it was as well adapted to the *gentiles*, who had great faith in *ruling stars*, and considered a *new star*, as a prognostic of the birth of a *great prince*.

3. This was Herod the great; many princes, of the name of Herod, reigned afterwards in Judea, which must be attended to, or it will create confusion.

4. That is, he called together the heads of the several courses of priests, as mentioned, I. Chron. xxiv. 4. &c.

6. *Bethlehem Judah*, and *Bethlehem Ephratah*, as it is called in Micah, (v. 2.) were the same place. This town is mentioned Gen. xxxv. 9. There was another town of the name of Bethlehem, belonging to the tribe of Zebulon.

prophets,

prophets, that Bethlehem was the place of the Messiah's birth, he gave this information to the Magi ; with a private charge, that when they had found the prince, of whom they were in search, they should acquaint him with his place of residence, that he also might pay his devotion to him. 8.

Thus instructed the Magi pursued their journey to Bethlehem ; and, to their great joy, saw the star, which had led them from their own country, still preceding them, till it stood over the house, where the holy child was born. 9, 10.

Having performed their devotions, and presented gifts to him, after the manner of their country, they returned home : but by a different road ; as they had been warned by God, in a vision, to have no further intercourse with Herod. 11, 12.

Soon after, Joseph, on the same divine admonition, carried the holy child, and his mother, into Egypt, to avoid the wrath of Herod. Thus the words of the prophet Hosea, which were applied first to the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage of that country, might also be applied to Christ ; *Out of Egypt have I called my son.* 13. 14. 15.

Herod being thus disappointed, in a violent rage, put to death all the children under two years of age in Bethlehem, and its neighbour- 16.

11. It was a custom in the east, and still prevails, to approach great people with presents. These presents however were often of the most trifling nature ; a flower, or an orange, was sufficient. The very valuable presents therefore which the Magi offered, notwithstanding they found the child in so mean a condition, shewed the strong ideas, with which they were impressed of his dignity.

15. Hosea xi. 1.

16. Macrobius, a heathen author, who lived about the end of the fourth century, mentions this massacre. Augustus, says he, having been informed, that Herod had ordered a son of his own to be killed, among some children, whom he had put to death in Syria, said (in allusion to the prohibition of swine's flesh among the Jews) that, *it was better to be Herod's hog, than his son.* The emperor, according to Macrobius's quotation, seems to have played upon the words ; it was better to be Herod's *uv, η υιοv* Saturn, II. 4.—Macrobius fixes the fact in Syria properly enough, because Judea was then a part of the province of Syria. See Tac. c. XII.

17.

18.

hood ; concluding, that Jesus could not escape so general a slaughter. Then was *completely* fulfilled the prediction of Jeremiah : *In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing comfort because they were destroyed.*

19. 20. 21.

22. 23.

After Herod's death, Joseph, by the direction of God, returned with the child into Judea : and afterwards on hearing that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod, retired to Nazareth in Galilee ; from which town Jesus was called a *Nazarene*, or a *Nazarite* ; conformably to the character, and office he bore, as foretold by the prophets.

CHAP.

III.

}

1.

2. 3.

About the 30th year of Jesus's life, which had thus far been spent in this obscure retreat, John the Baptist began to draw the attention of mankind. He preached in the desert country about Judea ; declaring the approach of the Messiah ; and persuading men to repent ;

18. Jer. xxxi. 15.

23. This is a difficult passage. It is not easy, in the first place, to point out the particular prophecy, to which the words, *he shall be called a Nazarene*, allude.

But secondly, if they refer, as is commonly supposed, to Judges xiii. 5. where it is said of Sampson, that he shall be a *Nazarite from the womb*, it is as difficult to apply them. A *Nazarite*, from a Hebrew word, which signifies *to separate*, was a person dedicated to God by some particular ceremonies, and for some particular purpose. Such a person was Sampson, who was appointed to deliver the children of Israel from the Philistines. And indeed Sampson seems to be no improper type of Christ, as by *his single power* he effected that deliverance.— But then how comes it that St. Matthew says, Christ received the appellation of a *Nazarite*, not from his being thus *separated*, but from his living *at Nazareth*, which has nothing to do with the profession of a *Nazarite*, nor is in any way connected with it, except in the similarity of the name ? It seems to me, tho I dare not lay much stress on the interpretation, that the Evangelist's meaning is this.

Jesus, who was *in fact* a *Nazarite*, in the strictest sense of the word, and according to all the predictions of the prophets, did not however receive the appellation from his conforming to the Levitical law, but was called a *Nazarene* or *Nazarite*, merely from his having spent the greatest part of his life at *Nazareth*. So that from this *accidental circumstance*, he received that name, which was, in so appropriated a manner, due to him from his *office*.

agreeably

agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord ; make his paths straight.*

This extraordinary person appeared with great strictness of life. 4.
His raiment was a mantle of the coarsest hair, tied round him with a leathern girdle ; and his food, such only as the desert afforded.

His fame as a prophet, and a teacher, soon drew a numerous company around him ; who being convinced by his doctrine, confessed their sins, and were baptized. 5. 6.

Among others, who attended him, John observed many of the Scribes and Pharisees ; and knowing probably, they came either out of pride or curiosity ; or perhaps trusting only in outward observances, he accosted them with some severity : 7.

“ Perverse men, cried he, search your hearts, and find what motives have brought you here. If indeed you are in earnest, let your lives shew it. It is not your descent from Abraham, that can save you. Other children will soon be multiplied unto Abraham. The end of the Jewish law is approaching. A kingdom of righteousness will soon be established ; to which my office is a preparation. The Messiah’s superior power will baptize you with the holy spirit of God. His religion will try the hearts of men ; and open in a new manner, the eternal consequences of their actions.” 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

While John was thus preaching to the people, Jesus himself came to him to be baptized. But John with great humility, refused 13. 14.

4. It is somewhat remarkable, that Elijah the prophet, in whose spirit, and power John the baptist came, is described in scripture in this very dress. *He was a hairy man, (dressed in a mantle of hair, or skin) and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.* 2 Kings. i. 8.—There is much dispute about the meaning of the word *locust* ; but as we know from Pliny (lib. VII. c. 30) that the insect of that name, was dried, and used as food in the east, we have great reason to suppose, that this insect is meant.

5. The prophetic office had now ceased, since the days of Malachi, who lived near 400 years before Christ : so that a person of John’s extraordinary appearance, who took on him the name of a prophet, drew great attention from the people.

7. See Mark vii. 1—14.

12. The word *fire* is used in scripture, both as the *symbol of purity*, and as the *instrument of vengeance*. The Talmudists say, that angels bathe themselves in rivers of fire.

13. 14. 15. to baptize a person so much his superior ; till Jesus informed him, that it was a necessary preparation to his public appearance in the world. The ceremony was then performed ; and God was pleased to close it with a miracle. The clouds breaking, as Jesus ascended from the water, a divine light was shed abroad, which hung hovering over him : while an awful voice, from the midst of the illumination, proclaimed, “ *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.*”

CHAP.
IV.
I.

One thing more remained, before Jesus made his public appearance in the world. It pleased God to shew, that, that Saviour, who was to die for sin, was himself free from sin : and that he, who was to succour his faithful servants in temptation, both knew what temptation was ; and was himself beyond its power†.

2. With this view Jesus retired, under the guidance of the spirit, into the wilderness ; where undergoing a long fast, as the great prophets of the law, Moses, and Elijah had formerly done, began to faint.

At

16. There is no mention made of a *light* : but the *opening of the heavens*, plainly suggests that idea ; especially as on other occasions, these miraculous communications were attended with a light ; as in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles ; and in the conversion of St. Paul. It was probably that divine appearance, which the Jews called the Shechinah.—*The bodily appearance of a dove* is generally, and justly exploded by almost all commentators. *Ὡς περὶ πτερά* may as properly be translated, *in the manner of a dove*. The *mode* of flying in this bird is peculiarly beautiful. It seems to have struck Virgil :

————— Aere lapsa quieto
Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas.

* Hebr. ii. 18. † Hebr. iv. 15.

1. The wilderness here mentioned, is supposed to be that wild desert country, of which Mr. Maundrel, (p. 79.) whose account I abridge, gives the following description.

“ From this place we proceeded in an intricate way, among hills, and vallies, all of a very barren aspect at present ; though discovering evident signs of culture in ancient times. In a few hours we arrived at that mountainous desert, in which our Saviour was tempted. It is a miserable, dry, barren scene, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn, and disordered, as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion. As we looked down a valley on
“ the

At that critical moment, the tempter appearing before him, made his first application to the necessities of his nature. "If you be the Son of God, said he, command these stones to be made bread." Jesus gave his answer a spiritual turn, implying, that mere earthly food was not so necessary to man, as the heavenly food of religion, and truth; and that man ought always to depend, in his exigencies, on the divine providence of God. On this answer, the devil framed his second temptation. Having raised the appearance of the temple of Jerusalem,

"the left, we saw some ruins of cottages, which we were told, were formerly the habitations of hermits. From these high grounds we had a delightful prospect over the plains of Jericho, the dead sea, and the mountains of Arabia. On descending into the plain, we soon came to the foot of mount Quarantania, which we were informed, is the mountain, from whence the devil tempted our Saviour with the visionary scene of all the kingdoms of this world. It is, as St. Mathew calls it, *an exceeding high mountain*: and in its ascent, difficult, and dangerous. On the top of it stands a small chapel; and half way up the ascent, another on the prominent ledge of a rock. On the side of the mountain also, are several caves, in which hermits used formerly to keep their lent. In these caves we found small bodies of Arabs, quartered, with fire-arms; who demanded 200 dollars for permitting us to climb the mountain; which was a greater sum than we chose to give."

3. Some commentators have resolved this whole account of our Saviour's temptation into an allegory, or vision: but I know not, on what grounds, except its being accompanied with some difficulties, which we cannot easily solve; and this would be as good a reason for turning any part of scripture which we happen to dislike, into an allegory. The *figurative style* of scripture is a different thing. Common sense tells us, that when our Saviour speaks of *cutting off a right hand*, or *plucking out a right eye*, he could only mean *renouncing our bad desires*. But when the account of a transaction is given in a plain historical manner, we are not certainly to apply the same rule to *fact*, which we may allowedly apply to *style*. This passage of scripture, no doubt, has its difficulties. I have prefaced the account of it with a few conjectures at the design, and intention of it; which yet seem to be founded on scriptural authority.

4. In this answer Jesus alluded to Deut. viii. 3.

5. Though I cannot consider the temptation of Christ as an allegory; yet I own, I am much inclined to suppose the wilderness to be the *only scene* of the whole transaction. The idea of supposing the devil to carry our Saviour to Jerusalem, appears to me much harsher, than to suppose him capable of raising an illusive scene, like Jerusalem. The Evangelists are never exact in trivial circumstances; but keep the main point in view; and it is, in fact, of no consequence, with regard to the temptation, whether the scene were real, or illusive. St. Luke's

6. Jerusalem, he placed Jesus on one of its battlements : and wished him, if he thus trusted in the mercies, and providence of God, to make a trial. Throw yourself down, said he, from this height, and see whether that God, in whom you trust, will send his angels, as it is written, to sustain you from harm. Jesus answered in a passage from Moses, intimating that we ought not to try any unnecessary experiments of God's power in our preservation : but that it was enough to rely on him in all unavoidable difficulties. The devil being thus foiled in his first attempts on Jesus, endeavoured next to find out, whether there were in him any latent sparks of ambition, or love of pleasure; and placing him on a high mountain ; Look round, said he, from this lofty stand : See all the kingdoms of the earth spread before you—all their wealth—all their glory—and all their pleasures—all is mine, and shall be yours, if you will only give up your trust in God ; and place it in me. This was too great an indignity for Jesus to bear. He rebuked the devil
10. 11.

expression, *he shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time*, rather leads to the supposition of an *ideal scene*. Most interpreters understand by *πασας τας βασιλειας της οικουμένης*, only the country of Judea. The word *οικουμένη* alone, no doubt, sometimes has that interpretation; but in *conjunction* with the other words it is here joined with, I think, it is a stronger expression, than such an interpretation warrants ; and the words, *in a moment of time*, gives it still more the air of an *illusive scene*.

If then we admit *one* representation to be illusive, we may suppose the *other* to have been so likewise: nor is it more improbable, that the devil should raise a scene like *the holy city, and the temple* ; than like *all the kingdoms of the earth*.—What the devil's power was, before Christianity, we know not ; but we are led, from the consideration of oracles, and possessions, to believe it greater, at least more ostensible, than it has been since. Perhaps when our Saviour says, *He saw Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven*, he speaks of this abridgment of his power.

6. The devil, in this temptation, would persuade our Saviour to an act of distrust under the idea of divine confidence : he was to cast himself down to see, whether the Lord could or would preserve him. To which our Saviour answers, Thou shalt not tempt, or try the Lord thy God : but what he orders thee to do, do without distrust. Some have supposed, that the devil, knowing the character of Christ, quoted scripture out of artifice, the more to deceive him.

with

with authority, and sent him away ; on which angels came, and ministred unto him.

In these solitary regions, Jesus had now spent some time, when ^{12. 13. 14.} ^{15. 16. 17.} hearing of the imprisonment of John, he returned to Nazareth : and from thence proceeded to Capernaum, a town of some resort, seated on the lake of Genesareth †.

At this place he began his ministry ; and thus completely fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah ‡ ; *The land of Zabulon, and Naphtalin, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan—Galilee of the gentiles §—the people, which sat in darkness saw a great light ; and to them, which sat in the region, and shadow of death, light is sprung up.*

At the time, when Jesus entered on his ministry, he began to ^{18. 19. 20.} ^{21. 22.} chuse certain disciples, to be the witnesses of his life and doctrine. He first chose two brothers, Peter and Andrew, inhabitants of Capernaum ; whom he found following their calling as fishermen, on the lake ; and soon afterwards, James, and John, two other brothers, who were fishermen likewise. All four immediately left their friends and occupation, and followed him.

† This lake is called also *the sea of Galilee*, and *the lake of Tiberias*. It was called the lake of Tiberias from a town of that name, which was seated on it's western shore. Near this town Herod had a palace, and beautiful hanging gardens running along the banks of the lake ; from which gardens some derive the name *Genesareth*. Others suppose it to have been a corruption of the ancient *Cinnereth*, spoken of in Numb. xxxiv. 11.

17. From the mention of the imprisonment of John, just before Jesus assumed his public character, we are rather led to suppose the evangelist might imply, that Jesus began his own ministry, about the time that John concluded his. This idea seems confirmed by Mar. i. 14.

‡ Is. ix. 1.

§ The whole of Galilee was, in fact, Jewish land ; but the upper part of it was so much frequented by the heathen nations, that bordered on it, that it obtained the name of *Galilee of the Gentiles*.

21. Zebedee, the father of James, and John, does not seem to have been a person in the lowest circumstances. He had a boat, and nets, and hired servants. The two brothers therefore not only left a calling, but a gainful one, which they seem to have had the means of carrying on with credit.

23. Accompanied by these attendants, he went through Galilee, preaching in the synagogues, and confirming his divine authority by miraculously healing the sick.

24. 25. His fame soon spread throughout all parts: numbers of diseased folks were brought to him; and multitudes of people attended all his motions.

CHAP.

V.

1. 2.

Having laid a sufficient foundation for their faith by his miracles, he thought it right to open next the great truths of his religion. And

23. We shall find our Saviour's miracles, as we proceed in the history, not only *confirming*, but *illustrating* his divine authority. His giving sight to the blind illustrated his power to illuminate the prejudiced minds of men—his healing their bodies shewed his power to heal their souls, and forgive their sins—his casting out devils displayed his final victory over the devil—and his raising the dead, his power to accomplish a general resurrection.—This places them in a stronger, and more beautiful light, than when they are considered only as acts of beneficence, or proofs of authority.

And yet some writers, I think, carry the allegory too far. Many of our Saviour's miracles, no doubt, admit of very beautiful allegory, as when St. Peter was called from the boat; (see a note on Mat. xiv. 25.) and when the blind man was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam; (see a note on John ix. 7.) but it is rather forced, when a writer sits down on set purpose, as some have done, to draw every thing into allegory. It was, no doubt, the *primary* intention of the miracles of our blessed Saviour, to authenticate his divine commission. Both he, and his apostles constantly appeal to them as such. Every thing else is of *secondary* consideration.—With regard to our Saviour's healing the sick, it hath been observed, that he healed no disorders, but such as were of themselves incurable. This I think, is not the fact; a *fever*, for instance, is a curable disorder; and so is a *leprosy*, as may be supposed from the legal purgation appointed for it. The stress therefore is laid by these interpreters on the wrong point. The miracle did not consist in the *kind of disorder* cured; but in the *instantaneous manner* in which the cure was effected.

1. It is evident the *people in general* (who are called here his *disciples*) were his audience; both from the 28th verse of the 7th chapter; and from the account which St. Luke gives us, ch. vii. 1.—Tho some parts of this discourse seem particularly addressed to his immediate followers; the great intention of it, seems to have been, to settle the opinions of the people with regard to the nature of the Messiah's kingdom. Our Saviour shews it to be very different from what, it is probable, they had conceived.—Dr. Lardner is of opinion (See his Credib. Part II, ch. 36.) that this discourse was delivered at various times; and that we are to look in St. Luke for the occasions of the several parts of it. Other interpreters think there

And that he might be heard with more ease, he ascended a rising ground, and delivered his first discourse to the people in the following manner.

He began by pronouncing a blessing on several characters, dispositions, and situations in life, which are in general treated with the greatest neglect.

Blessed, said he, are the humble and lowly-minded, who neither value themselves on their attainments, nor on the advantages of the world. These alone are truly disposed to embrace my religion. 3.

Blessed are they, who having disengaged themselves from the indulgences, and vanities of life, pass through it in that serious manner, that becomes a state of trial. Their self-denial here shall be their comfort hereafter. 4.

Blessed are the meek, the gentle, and inoffensive. Their happiness in this world, is an earnest of that blessing, which shall attend them in the next. 5.

Blessed are they, who have formed such a habit of piety in their minds, that it acts spontaneously, like their appetites. This is the greatest height of religious attainment. 6.

Blessed is the humane and merciful man. His mercy to others, will, in time of need, call down mercy on himself. 7.

Blessed are they, whose hearts and affections are cleansed from impurity. Such heavenly minds alone have intercourse with God. 8.

Blessed are they, who are not satisfied with a mere inoffensive behaviour in themselves; but endeavour to promote peace among others. These are the true children of the gospel. 9.

there is little ground for this opinion, as Luke is generally esteemed more immethodical, than any of the other Evangelists—as he wrote from *what had been delivered unto him from eye witnesses*—as Matthew was himself an apostle—and lastly as there may be traced a very evident connection through all the parts of this discourse.

10. 11. 12. Blessed are they, who are ill-treated, reviled, and persecuted for the sake of religion. Thus of old the prophets were persecuted; in whose reward, as well as sufferings, they shall partake.

13. 14. 15. You, who are intended to be the preachers of my religion, like salt, shall purify a corrupt world. But you must first be pure yourselves. You are like a city built on a hill, which is conspicuous to all. You are the light of the world. Let that light shine for the benefit of others.

17. Do not however imagine, that my institutions are intended to overturn the law, and the prophets, which you have thus far been taught to reverence. By no means. It is my business, and intention to fulfil every tittle of the moral and ceremonial law: and he who hath observed both the most religiously; is the best qualified to receive the gospel. So far indeed am I from destroying the moral law; that I mean

13. The figure here is exceedingly bold, *Εαν μωρανθη το σολας*: if the salt be infatuated.—The ancients used rock, or fossil salt, which was much more subject to impurities, than the salt we use. Mr. Maundrel very well illustrates this passage by the account he gives us of the *valley of salt*, near Aleppo. “There is a small precipice, says he, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt. In this you may discover the veins of it lying. I broke off a piece, which having been exposed to the sun, rain, and air, had entirely *lost its flavour*; tho it had the sparks, and particles of salt. The inner parts retained their flavour.”

14. Sir Isaac Newton, and others, have supposed, that our blessed Saviour, on this, and other occasions, alluded to objects before him: and Mr. Maundrel speaks of a town, called *Saphet*, imagined to be the ancient *Bethuliah*, which was easily seen from what is called the *mount of the Beatitudes*.

16. It is probable, that in this passage, the doctrine of the apostles is meant by the salt; and their example, by the city on a hill, and the candle on a candle-stick.

18. *Κεφαλα*, which is translated *tittle*, signifies the ornamental part of a letter, which was used, when Hebrew was elegantly written.

20. As far as we can judge from this, and the following passages, the Pharisees had greatly corrupted the spirit of the law; and taught, at least by their example, that its precepts extended only to outward actions—that a regard for the ceremonial part would excuse the moral—and that some important privileges, were connected with a descent from Abraham. All these notions our Saviour refutes.

mean to exalt, and perfect it. He therefore who shall take his measure of perfection, from the bare letter of it, as taught by the Scribes, and Pharisees; or from their glosses upon it, shall in no degree be qualified for my kingdom. The sixth commandment, for instance, hath been commonly limited by the Jewish doctors to murder: but my institution supposes every man to incur guilt, who even in his thoughts is at enmity with his neighbour. Be assured therefore that no religious services, accompanied with a malicious heart, can be acceptable to God. As it is an easier matter to make up a quarrel at first, than when is carried to extremity; so the dreadful consequences, that follow the breach of this commandment, are best prevented by rooting out at once every malicious tendency.

21. 22.

23. 24.

25. 26.

Again, the Jewish doctors confine the seventh commandment to the crime of adultery. But my institutions go farther. They set a guard upon the heart. The *impure thought*, when cherished, becomes guilt: and every impurity, however natural and constitutional it may

27.

28.

29. 30.

The hypocritical pretences of the Pharisees had however gained so much credit with the people, that it was proverbial among the Jews, *That if two men only should enter the kingdom of heaven, one of them would be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee.* Great therefore must be the surprise of our Saviour's hearers, when they found these very persons marked out of all others as the least qualified to enter the kingdom of heaven.

21. The climax here is this: If you are *angry* with your brother without a cause, it is wrong. If you call him *raca*, (a *vain light fellow*,) it is worse. If you call him a *wicked man* (which *fool* in the Jewish language signifies) it is worst of all. Some interpreters suppose, that *μωγε*, *fool* has crept into the text, instead of *morab*.

22. Philo (de Sacrif. 844.) observes, that when a man had injured his neighbour, and acknowledged the injury, he was first to make reparation, and then to present his sacrifice.—To this practice our Saviour seems to allude when he says, *Leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother; and then come, and offer thy gift.*—The expression *hell-fire* alludes to the *valley of Hinnon*, where the Israelites formerly had offered their children to Moloch; and in our Saviour's time, burnt the bones of sacrifices, and other rubbish from the city. As there was almost a constant fire there, they thought it illustrative of hell.

29. The word *σκανδαλον* properly signifies a *stumbling block*. Our Saviour therefore considers every thing, that *obstructs religion*, as something *laid in its way*.

be

31. 32. be supposed, must be rooted out. Thus also, in the matter of divorce, great liberty hath been taken under the law : but my institution forbids divorce on any account, except adultery : it calls him an adulterer, who puts away his wife, and marries another ; and her an adulteress, who marries, after she is thus put away.

33. Again, the Jewish doctor, glossing on the third commandment, enjoins you religiously to perform whatever you have bound yourself
34. 35. 36. to by an oath. But my institution totally forbids the use of oaths
37. in common conversation, either by the Creator—or by the creature ; allowing only a bare affirmation or denial.

38. 39. 40. Again, the law of retaliation demands *an eye for an eye, and a tooth*
41. 42. *for a tooth*. My institutions forbid this rigour ; and on every occasion prescribe a kind, and gentle behaviour—a willingness to give—and a willingness to forgive—a readiness to part with something even of your just right for the sake of peace.

43. Among the glosses on the law, you have heard it said, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*. My directions are different.
44. 45. Your enemy, whoever he be, is the creature of that God, who re-
46. 47. gards all mankind with an equal eye of tenderness, and mercy. The
48. Pharisee considers the kindness of others to him, as the measure of his kindness to them. Do you imitate the boundless mercies of that gracious Father, *who maketh his sun to shine on the evil, and on the good ; and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust*.

CHAP.

VI.

1. 2.

3. 4.

Devote yourself, and all your actions to God. Sanctify every duty by referring it to him. If you give alms through a motive of vanity ; the praise of men is your reward. But if you seek for the approba-

32. See Mat. xix. 9. Mark x. 11. Luke xvi. 18.

37. Bowyer conjectures, that this passage should be pointed thus : Ο λογος υμων ναι ; ναι : ε ; ε. Is your speech affirmative ? Let it be affirmative. Is it negative ? Let it be negative.

43. The latter part of this gloss, *Thou shalt hate thine enemy*, is not found in the Jewish law ; but was founded on those peculiar severities, which God for particular reasons ordered against the Canaanites, &c.

tion of God; give them secretly, and with a view only to please him.

Thus again, if you imitate the vain gloriousness of a hypocrite in your prayers; you shall receive only a hypocrite's reward, the praise of men. But the sincerity of your secret prayers shall meet the acceptance of God.—To the uprightness of your heart attend, more than to the length of your petitions. God knows your wants: but he expects you to give him a test of your sincerity. 5. 6. 7. 8.

In your prayers begin with an acknowledgment of praise to your heavenly father. Let the whole race of mankind be the next object of your petitions—pray, that the kingdom of righteousness may overspread the world—and that men may live in obedience to its laws on earth, as the blessed angels do in heaven. With regard to your temporal wants, pray only for the necessities of life, or at least with entire submission to the will of God.—With regard to your spiritual wants, pray for the forgiveness of your sins: but be well assured, that you pray in the spirit of forgiveness to others. Intreat God to assist you in passing through the dangers, and temptations of this world; and conclude your petitions with expressing your trust in his power, and goodness to grant all you ask.—But I repeat to you, that you are by no means to expect forgiveness at God's hands, unless you forgive others, by rooting entirely out of your hearts all malicious, and revengeful thoughts. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13.

The same devotion to God, which ought to govern your alms, and your prayers, ought to govern also your religious austerities. Whatever of this kind you practise on a worldly motive, meets only a worldly reward. It is *devoting the action to God*, which sanctifies it in his sight. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18.

6. *Thy Father, which is in secret.* These words with the omission of the particle *τω*, which is omitted in some MSS. will be, *Pray in secret to thy Father.*

7. Perseverance in prayer is often recommended; so that these *repetitions*, and *much speaking*, must be something different.

19. Thus spiritualizing your minds, consider not your worldly goods as
 20. your treasures. They are liable to many accidents. But consider
 21. the enjoyments of a blessed futurity alone in this light ; which are the
 only treasures not subject to change. And of this be assured, that
 wherever your treasure is, your heart and it will always be together.

22. 23. It is the worldly mind, which misleads you. When your sight is
 clear, your motions are properly directed : but when it is impaired,
 you are bewildered. Just so the mind. Cleanse it from the love of
 earthly things ; and it will of course be directed to heavenly.

24. Besides the earthly mind is utterly *inconsistent* with religion. It is
 impossible to devote yourself, at the same time, to God and the world.

25. Be not therefore *solicitous* even about *necessary things*. That God,
 26. who created you, will continue to preserve you. That hand which
 feedeth the fowls of the air, will reach its protection to you. With-
 27. out this protection even the most anxious of your endeavours would
 signify nothing. Consider who cloaths the flowers of the field in all
 28. 29. 30. that splendor, which no art can rival. Will he, think you, who
 31. arrays the lily, neglect you ? Be not then solicitous about the things
 32. 33. of this life. Leave the solitudes of the world to it's children. Let
 it be your care to practise the rules of religion ; and your heavenly
 34. Father, who knoweth your wants, will properly supply them. Let
 not the future therefore distress you : leave to-morrow to itself ;
 and trouble not to-day with evils, which belong not to it.

C H A P.

VII.

1. 2.

But however pure you may suppose yourselves, I forbid all rash
 censures of others. The malicious detracting temper has little to ex-

27. *ἡλικία* here signifies more properly *age*, than *stature* ; and *πυχὺς* is taken for a *short dura-*
tion. To add a cubit to a man's stature, is a great thing ; which the sense rejects. See Wetstein.

30. *Into the oven*. In the Eastern countries, fuel is often so scarce, that they burn dried
 grass. Their great want of firing was to supply their ovens.

34. No exposition can do justice to the original in the concluding verses of this chapter ;
 but for the sake of uniformity, I am obliged to modernize them.

pect from the favour of God. Look rather at home; and try, 3, 4, 5.
 whether you cannot find greater faults in your own hearts, than in
 those of your neighbours. Correct *yourselves* therefore, before you pre-
 sume to censure *others*. And even in cases, where it may be proper to 6.
 censure; be prudently reserved. Indiscrete counsel injures both the
 advice, and the adviser.

But in this, and in every thing else, have recourse to prayer, and 7, 8.
 the assistance of God. He who prays earnestly, may depend upon be-
 ing heard. With what attention does the earthly father commonly 9, 10.
 listen to the request of his child? And can you suppose, that your 11.
 heavenly father will be less attentive?

Learn also, from God's kindness to you, to be at all times kind to 12.
 your neighbour: and make it a rule in all *cases, to do to others, what-*
ever you might reasonably expect them to do to you. In observing this
 rule you fulfil the law.

Thus the path, which I have marked out for you, is narrower than 13, 14.
 that, in which the world commonly walks. But consider the great
 point to which it leads; and be not discouraged from pursuing it. 15.
 Listen not to those false teachers, whose doctrines produce not a holy
 life. As the fruit distinguishes the tree; so does a holy life, the 16, 17, 18,
 teacher. A good teacher will as certainly shew his doctrine by his 19, 20.
 holy life; as a good tree will produce good fruit: and that teacher,
 who does not shew himself in this way, is of no more worth, than a
 tree which bears bad fruit. It is not professing the gospel, nor dis-
 playing your gifts, and endowments, that will make you my disciples. 21, 22, 23.
 Be your professions, or your gifts, what they may, if they are unac-
 companied with good works, they belong not to my institution.

6. See Mat. x. 14. 16. Mark vi. 11. Luke ix. 5. and x. 11. Acts xiii. 51.

19. Bowyer conjectures this verse to be an interpolation. It is properly introduced Mat.
 iii. 10. but here it certainly interrupts the argument, and the sense. It introduces the
punishment, when the argument proceeds only on the *investigation*.

24, 25. He therefore, who having heard the gospel, conforms his practice to it, resembles that prudent man, who builds his house upon a rock. The rains, and storms, and floods may beat against it: but it is founded in security; and resists their force. While he, who leaves a good life out of his religion, forgets the foundation, and raises his house on the sand. The storms and floods arise: it is ill-founded, and is instantly beaten down.

28, 29. Thus Jesus concluded his divine discourse. And his hearers were struck with admiration; for they easily saw, that his preaching had a different tendency, and came accompanied with higher authority than that of the Scribes.

C H A P.
VIII.

1, 2. On his descending the hill, where he had been teaching the people, he was met by a leper; who acknowledging his divine power, begged his assistance with passionate exclamations. Jesus immediately embraced the opportunity, both of confirming his doctrines by a miracle, and of relieving the man's distress. He laid his hand therefore on the leper, and healing him with a word, ordered him not to speak of the matter: but to shew himself to the priests, who were appointed by the law as the proper judges of the reality of the cure.

As he entered Capernaum, a centurion belonging to a Roman garrison in the neighbourhood, met him, and besought him to heal his

4. This caution, which our blessed Saviour generally shews, in ordering his miracles not to be divulged, is commonly attributed to his desire of avoiding all offence. If he had been solicitous to draw multitudes of people about him, they might often have been inclined to popular tumult. It is true, he might have avoided any thing of this kind by his divine power; but it was certainly more exemplary to his followers, to use common, prudential means, than to have recourse, on all occasions, to a miracle.—For the same reason it seems probable, that he did not openly profess himself to be the Messiah; but rather used such language, and wrought such miracles, as might convince all *well-disposed* persons of this great truth.—The expression *for a testimony unto them*, means, that the priests pronouncing the cure to be real, would give testimony to the people, that it was so.

4. See the law of leprosy, Levit. xiii. 13. and xiv. 4.

servant, who was struck with a palsy. Jesus desirous of giving the
 Jews an instance of faith in a person, whom they despised as a hea-
 then, told the officer, he would go home with him, and perform the
 cure. The centurion, struck with a sense of his own inferiority,
 declared his unworthiness of such an honour; and desired Jesus to
 speak a word only at that distance, and he had no doubt of it's effect.
 Even I, said he, who am only an inferior officer in an army, can by
 speaking to those under my command, execute what orders I please,
 at a distance. Jesus, turning round, expressed his admiration at this
 instance of faith, which he said was greater, than he had found
 even in Israel; intimating at the same time, that this was an earnest
 of that great change, which should speedily take place; when the
 heathen should be received into the favour of God; and the Jews
 rejected for their infidelity. Then addressing himself to the centu-
 rion, and commending his faith, he told him that his servant was
 already healed: which on returning home, he found to be true.

At Capernaum Jesus retired from the multitude into Peter's house;
 and finding his wife's mother in a fever, he took her by the hand,
 and healed her instantly; so that she was able to attend them at
 supper.

This miraculous cure being soon noised abroad, numbers of sick,
 and diseased people were brought to him in the evening, whom he
 immediately healed; fulfilling by these acts of mercy, as well as by
 his death, the prophecy of Isaiah, *Himself took our infirmities, and*

13. *Simple faith*, which is often confounded with trust, divine love, and other christian
 graces, depends, no doubt, on evidence: but still it is greatly in a man's own power to search
 into evidence, and strengthen his faith. A man may neglect the strongest evidence, through
 self-sufficiency, and it may make no impression upon him. Our Saviour therefore on this,
 and other occasions, seems to consider faith, in a great degree, in our own power; and lays
 that stress upon it, which in every religion, as well as the christian, it deserves; for no reli-
 gion can take possession of the consciences of men, unless a belief in it be first firmly
 established.

17. Isa. liii. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

18. *bare our sicknesses.* But finding the multitude press upon him; and being spent with fatigue, he ordered his disciples to provide a boat to carry him over the lake.

19, 20, 21,
22. On his embarking, he had an opportunity of proving the insincerity of some, who pretended to be his followers. They made zealous professions; but it appeared, that it was either on the expectation of some temporal advantage; or with the view of mixing more of the world with their religion, than it allowed. When they found that all their hopes were referred to a future life, they thought it prudent to retire.

23, 24. Jesus therefore and his disciples embarked alone; but they had scarce gained the middle of the lake, when a violent gust of wind arose, and endangered the safety of the vessel. Jesus himself was asleep, taking that repose, which he had so long wanted. The
25. disciples therefore in great terror, awoke him, imploring his assistance.
26, 27. Jesus first rebuked their want of confidence in him; and then gave them a new instance of his miraculous power, by instantly calming the sea.

28. As he landed on the other side of the lake, in the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him, who frequented those solitary

22. *Let the dead bury their dead.* Dead while she liveth—dead, and is alive again—dead in trespasses and sins—are all similar modes of speaking.

28. This is the first instance, that occurs of demoniacs; except, where they are mentioned, (v. 16.) in the aggregate. Some resolve all these appearances into ordinary distempers; but I think this is rather a hardy expedient, and attended with greater difficulties, than it removes. What is said against their reality is chiefly founded on their being very unlike any thing, which we meet with at present. But if we reason thus, we may deny, like the Sadduces, the existence of angels—we may deny all super-natural appearances of the divine presence—and the whole economy of the Jewish theocracy—It seems safer, I think, and easier, to suppose (what indeed we have some grounds to believe from scripture) that the devil had, before the times of christianity, at least greater *visible* power, than he has now. Indeed without supposing this, we cannot easily get rid of many difficulties in *profane history* with regard to oracles; nor of the possessions, mentioned by Josephus, and other writers, as existing among the Jews.

regions,

regions, in which the Jews commonly made their tombs. These men were so exceedingly fierce, that travellers durst not pass that road : yet on seeing Jesus, the wicked agents that possessed them, were so terrified, that they cried out ; calling him by his name—expressing their dread of punishment—and beseeching him, if he cast them out of the men, to suffer them to enter into a herd of swine, which was feeding at a little distance. Jesus permitting them, the whole herd rushed violently down a precipice into the lake, and were destroyed. The keepers immediately flying into the city, and giving intelligence of what was done ; the whole body of the people came out to Jesus ; and probably terrified by his power, desired he would

29, 30, 31.

32.

33.

34.

29. *What have we to do with thee ?* Better rendered, *what hast thou to do with us ?*

32. There is not one of the miracles of our blessed Saviour, against which the cavils of infidelity have been more generally, and perhaps more successfully, directed, than this. The usual answer is, that our Saviour in fact, only permitted the devils to enter the swine, but that if he had even authorized them, it was justifiable ; for if the Jews were the proprietors of these animals, they deserved punishment for transgressing their law ; and if the Gentiles, they equally deserved it, for leading the Jews into temptation—But I cannot say, I am satisfied with this answer. There is something in the whole transaction so contrary to the gentle spirit, both of the gospel, and it's founder, that I own I should rather wait for the time, when this, and other difficult points, shall receive that solution, of which I have not the least doubt, they are fully capable. I am much of the opinion of honest Erasmus, who in his dedication of the works of Hilary, says, “ We may talk of referring difficulties to the next general council ; in my opinion, it would be better to refer them to that blessed time, when we shall see God face to face.”—Dr. Doddridge concludes his account of this miracle, with these pleasing reflections.

“ From this remarkable story we have surely reason to adore the good providence of God, “ who restrains the malignant spirits of hell from spreading these desolations among men, and “ beasts, which would otherwise turn the earth into a wilderness. What matter of joy is it “ to reflect, that all their fury, and rage is under a divine controul ; and that they cannot “ hurt even the meanest animal, without permission from above.”

34. It seems indeed from their desiring him so humbly to depart out of their coasts, that they considered this as a judgment upon them, and feared a greater, if he stayed ; agreeably to that passage in Psalm cv. 37. *Egypt was glad at their departing, for they were afraid of them.* If the Gergesenes had not been afraid, they would not have intreated him, but would have forced him ; or have attempted to punish him. St. Luke expressly says (viii. 27) *they were taken with great fear ;* which could only be the fear of some greater judgement.

leave

leave their coasts. Seeing them therefore unprepared, at this time, to receive the gospel, he repassed the lake.

- 1.
2. On his arrival at Capernaum, a paralytic was brought to him lying on a couch. Jesus observing, that his faith was sufficient to make him a convert to christianity, told him, that his sins were forgiven.
3. This was matter of great offence to some of the Jewish doctors, who
4. stood by; tho they did not care to express it openly. Jesus knowing their thoughts, rebuked their infidelity, after they had seen so many
5. miracles; and asked them, If they thought it required more power
6. 7. to forgive sin, than instantaneously to heal a bodily disorder? He then healed the man with a word; and bad them judge from that instance,
8. whether he had not authority also to forgive sin.—But whatever the Jewish doctors might think of Jesus, the people every where considered him as a prophet sent from God.

9. About this time Jesus called Matthew, who was a tax-gatherer
10. under the Roman government, to be his disciple; and afterwards refreshing himself at his house, many people of ordinary character, with whom Matthew had before commonly conversed, sat down to table
11. with him. This seeming familiarity did not escape the Pharisees, who expressed their surprize to the disciples of Jesus, that their master should demean himself by keeping such company. Jesus informed of their cavil, asked them, Whether the sick, or the healthy had
12. more occasion for a physician? And bad them distinguish, as their
- 13.

2. This was agreeable to the whole tenor of the gospel, which offered forgiveness of all past sins to every convert, on his first sincerely embracing Christianity.

6. *Take up thy bed.* This he might very easily do, as the beds of those countries consisted of little more, than a thin mattress beneath, and a coverlet above.

9. The text says, *he arose and followed him.* But there is no reason to suppose he did not make up his accounts, and settle his business.

10. It is probable, Matthew might invite them, in order to give them an opportunity of conversing with Jesus.

own scriptures taught them, between works of charity ; and mere outward observances, which were the works they chiefly valued. My principal errand, added he, in this world is to convert sinners.

At another time, the disciples of John coming to Jesus in something of the same spirit, as if he were not sufficiently strict in outward observances, asked, Whence it was, that they, and the disciples of the Pharisees, were enjoined great austerities ; while among his disciples, they observed nothing of that kind practised ? Jesus informed them by an allusion to the ceremonies of a marriage, that his disciples were yet only in a state of probation—that their time of suffering, and austerity should soon arrive—but that the strict doctrines he taught, could not be yet properly ingrafted on the old habits, and prejudices, which they still retained.

While Jesus was thus discoursing with the disciples of John, a ruler of the synagogue came into the room, and kneeling down before him, said, he was convinced from his miracles, of the greatness of his power ; and was come to implore his assistance : My daughter, added he, is now dead ; but I am persuaded, that you can raise her again to life. On this Jesus, and his disciples, leaving the company, went with him.

On their way, a woman who had been twelve years afflicted with a flux of blood, and wished for a secret cure, taking the advantage of a croud about Jesus, privately touched his garment ; persuaded, from what she had seen of his power, that she needed nothing farther to

13. Hof. vi. 6.

17. *New wine into old bottles.* The ancients used to preserve their wine in skins, and leathern bags ; which were not very lasting ; and when old, very improper for wine, in a state of fermentation.

18. In every village, where there was a synagogue, ten men were constantly obliged to attend public worship ; of whom three were called rulers.

20. She wished for a secret cure, as her disorder was a legal uncleanness. See Levit. xv. 19.

heal her disorder. Jesus, not willing that such an instance of faith should pass unobserved, turning round, told her, that her cure was the reward of her faith.

23. Jesus by this time approaching the ruler's house, found the people in great affliction ; and singing lamentations over the deceased, according to the custom of the country. On this gently repressing their sorrow, he told them, they should see only the common effects of sleep. At first they were inclined to deride him ; but they soon saw the young woman delivered in perfect health into the hands of her parents ; and joined the whole country in their astonishment at so great a miracle.

27. As he left the ruler's house, two blind men, probably waiting for him, intreated his compassion. Jesus, at all times inculcating the necessity of faith ; asked them, Whether they firmly believed, he was able to do what they desired ? And putting their cure on this issue, he restored them both to sight.—His injunction however to keep the matter secret, was but ill-observed by their overflowing gratitude.

32. 33. 34. About the same time he healed a dumb man possessed with an evil spirit. The simplicity of the common people immediately acknowledged the power of God : but the pride of the Pharisees, attributed the miracle to a confederacy with devils.

35. Thus Jesus travelled through the country, preaching the gospel, and confirming the truth of it by miracles.

23. On a report, says Josephus, that I was dead, my friends hired minstrels (*αυλητας*) to lead the lamentations.

24. Our Saviour, in this passage, seems to allude to the triumph of Christianity over the grave, by calling *death, sleep*. He spoke the same language in the case of Lazarus. His disciples, after him, adopted the idea, of which we have many instances ; *they who sleep in Jesus—many among you sleep—the first-fruits of them that slept*, &c. The ancient Christians, still improving on this idea, used to call a church-yard, *κοιμητηριον*, a *sleeping-place*. Hence the word, *Cemetery*.

Great was the disposition of the common people to hear him. 36.
Wherever he went, they gathered round him in multitudes. Jesus
observing this, and knowing what blind guides they had to follow,
bad his disciples pray to God to enable them, and all other ministers 37. 38.
of the gospel, to discharge their duty faithfully in instructing the
people.

Soon after this, calling his twelve apostles together (whose names
were Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas,
Matthew, James the less, Thaddeus or Jude, Simon the Canaanite,
and Judas Iscariot) he gave them power to work miracles; and
sending them out to preach, thus instructed them.

Go not, said he, among the Gentiles, and Samaritans; but con-
fine your ministry at present to the Jews. Explain the nature of 7.
the gospel to them; and confirm your doctrine by miracles. Ex- 8.
ercise liberally the divine power I have given you. Freely com-
municate, what you have so freely received. And be not solicitous 9. 10.
about making provision for your journey. Travel in your ordinary
manner; and trust in providence for your support. The workman
is worthy of his hire. Find out, in every town, the best disposed 11. 12.

C H A P.

X.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

3. Very good reasons are given for supposing Bartholomew to be Nathaniel (see Stanhope's
Ep. and Gosp. Vol. IV) Thomas signifies a twin: so does Didymus. Jude is called Lebbeus,
probably from Lebba, a town in Palestine.

4. Supposed rather the *Canite* from Cana in Galilee.—Others suppose from a Hebrew word,
which signifies *zealous*.

8. The ancient Christians, in their apologies, &c. lay great stress on Christ's *commissioning*
others to perform the works, which he performed himself. This, they say, shewed a divine
power, which no prophet ever shewed or magician pretended to shew. Among the miracles
here specified, *raising the dead*, is one. But this is omitted by the other Evangelists; and by
St. Matthew also in some very ancient MSS.

10. Neither a coat, nor a staff is forbidden; only more than one of each—that is, the
disciples are forbidden to take anything superfluous. Thus this passage accords with Mark
vi. 8.

E

people,

13. people, and with them remain. Bless the house you enter, and if
 14. your blessing find no acceptance there, it will at least return upon
 15. yourselves. Such places as receive you not, must be left to the
 judgment of God. They have had an offer of salvation, which
 Sodom, and Gomorrha never had; and must therefore expect a
 severer question.
16. But be assured, the opposition you shall meet, will be very great.
 Your harmless lives are ill-opposed to the wickedness of the world.
 Use prudent caution therefore. But notwithstanding all, you shall
 17. 18. 19. often be obliged to bear testimony to the truth at the hazard of your
 20. lives. You shall often be punished; and often brought before the
 rulers of the earth: but, in these cases, meditate not what answer
 21. 22. you shall make. The spirit of God shall direct you. Only settle
 it in your minds, that this opposition shall be very great: for the
 prejudices of mankind will be superior to all the affections of nature.
 Brother shall league against brother, and father against child. Be
 not however discouraged; but consider the great end of all your
 labours; which perseverance shall certainly obtain.
23. Yet notwithstanding I encourage you to bear persecution with
 fortitude, I mean not that you should invite it. From one city,
 retreat to another; and yet the gospel shall hardly be preached
 through all the cities of Israel, before the destruction of the Jewish
 nation shall take place.

13. Let *your peace*. The *imperative* here is put for the *future*. And in many other passages imperatives may be considered as prophetic expressions.

14. The passage in the original *shake off the dust of your feet*, is well illustrated by a Jewish custom. The Jews were so attached to their own land, which they thought the only seat of holiness; that when they returned into it from any heathen country, they used to shake the dust from their feet, that they might not pollute the holy soil. The expression therefore in the original, which alludes to this custom, carries with it, I should suppose, no idea of a curse; but only signifies, that they, who rejected the gospel, were to be considered among the heathen.

17. The text says, they will *scourge you in the synagogues*. The Jewish synagogue was not only a place of worship, but a court of justice; where, as in our courts of justice, smaller punishments were sometimes inflicted; see Luke xii. 11. Acts xxii. 19.

You

You must not expect better treatment than I have experienced before you. I shall bear the reproaches of the world first; and it must be your comfort to follow my example. Be not therefore discouraged from preaching publicly the doctrines I have committed to your charge. A time will come, when the uprightness of your hearts will be made manifest. And fear not those, whose utmost malice can touch only the body; but fear him, whose power reaches the soul—whose providence extends to the smallest parts of his creation; and will certainly therefore make his chosen servants the objects of his care.

Consider therefore the persecutions you undergo, as a test of your religion. Those only are my faithful disciples, who amidst the reproaches, and ill usage of the world, dare confess me, and maintain their profession. I repeat it to you, that the opposition between the gospel, and the world shall be very great; and you must expect to see enmity even among the members of the same family. This too will be a test of mens fidelity to me. He who loves his earthly connections, more than he does me, is no more a disciple of the gospel; than he, who shrinks from persecution. That man alone, in reality saves his life, who saves it to eternity. With these instructions I send you to preach the gospel; and shall consider those, who receive you, as receiving me; and as giving such an evidence

27. *That preach ye on the house-tops*, says the text. The windows of an eastern house being secured, and shut up by trellis work; the inhabitants, when they wished to see anything in the street, or to say anything to the people below, used to go to the top of the house, which was commonly a terrace with a low parapet.

29. *Are not two sparrows*, says our Saviour, *sold for a farthing?* alluding probably to the sparrows, and other small birds, which were sold in the temple-courts, for the purpose of sacrifice. See Levit. xiv. 49. The farthing was the Roman *as*, or the tenth part of the *denarius*, about three farthings of our money. One farthing might buy two sparrows, and two farthings five. See Luke xii. 6.

42. The doctrine of this verse plainly is, that all our good works should be done, for the sake of God, and Christ. This is doing every thing *for the glory of God*.

of their regard for the gospel itself, as cannot fail to procure them its rewards.

C H A P.

XI.

1.

Jesus thus dismissing his disciples, went himself to preach among the towns in the neighbourhood.

2.

About this time John the Baptist, who was still in prison, having probably long observed a jealousy subsisting among his followers against Jesus, and being desirous of removing it now at the close of his life; and of giving them those exalted notions of the Messiah, which he himself had, sent two of them to Jesus to enquire, whether he were the real Messiah; or whether some other was to be still expected?

3.

4. 5.

Jesus, instead of answering John's disciples directly, performed many miracles before their eyes; and bad them tell John what they had seen: adding by way of gentle rebuke to the inquirers, that they who took offence, in the midst of such manifest means of conviction, lost sight of their real interest.

6.

7. 8.

After they were gone, Jesus thus spoke to the people about John. It was not, said he, a trifling master, or the expectation of seeing any wordly pomp, or parade, that carried such numbers of you into the desolate regions of the wilderness. You expected to see a prophet; and indeed you saw one of the greatest, that ever appeared

9. 10.

11.

—one who was himself the subject of prophecy—the predicted fore-

2. See Matt. ix. 14. and Luke vii. 18.

5. The miracles performed were nearly those mentioned in Isaiah (xxxv. 5. 6.) so that our Saviour's answer was an appeal to *prophecy*, as well as *miracles*.

6. Some explain this passage, as if John, who had now finished his ministry, sent his two disciples to Jesus by way of obtaining a sort of authoritative, or official proof, if I may so call it, of his being the Messiah.—I should think this a good interpretation, if the sixth verse did not rather seem to point at the incredulity of the disciples. Others, tho I think without much ground, imagine from the sixth and eleventh verses, that John, who might suppose Jesus would have delivered him from Herod, and was worn out by a long imprisonment, had himself begun to doubt.

runner of the Messiah. His office, as preparing the way for the gospel, gave him a superiority to all the prophets of the law; and yet it is inferior to the office of those teachers, who are immediately engaged in propagating the gospel itself. From the days of John, 12. 13. the law and the prophets may be said to have ceased. The terms of salvation are now offered, not only to the Jews; but to all nations; and they, who were esteemed the most unworthy, shall be found to accept them with the greatest eagerness. John is that holy 14. person, who, in the power and spirit of Elias, was predicted to precede the Messiah.—This great truth Jesus particularly recommended to their serious attention. 15.

In the mean time (added Jesus) the Jewish nation is strangely 16. 17. perverse. Every method of calling them to repentance, is rendered *ineffectual* by their obstinacy. John's austerity hath been called madness: 18. and my behaviour, which is more open, and unreserved, hath been treated as disorderly. But wisdom, in the end, will vindicate it- 19. self.

Here Jesus took an opportunity to exemplify what he had said, 20. by mentioning some of those cities, in which he had chiefly performed his miracles. If those works, said he, which I wrought in Chorazin 21. 22. 23. and Bethsaida, had been performed in Tyre, and Sidon, they would, long ago, have repented—Or, if Sodom had seen the 24. miracles, which Capernaum saw, it might have existed to this day.—At the last judgment therefore these cities of Israel shall experience a much severer treatment, than those of the heathen.

Then Jesus breaking out into a prayer, thanked God that the 25. 26. gospel, tho undiscoverable by worldly wisdom, and inaccessible to wordly tempers, was open to all those humble, sincere, and gentle

14. Malachi iv. 5, is the prophecy here alluded to, on which the Jews laid great stress; and it was one of the Jewish reasons for not believing in Jesus, that Elias had not appeared.

27. spirits, who wished to receive it. Your heavenly father, (said he, turning to the people) who formed this great scheme for the salvation of men, hath intrusted the execution of it to me. No man therefore can understand this divine revelation; but through me, 28. 29. 30. Come then to me all ye, who labour under the burthen of sin, or of unavailing rites; and I will give you rest. That lowliness of heart, which I teach, will ease you of many distresses. Take therefore my yoke upon you; you will find it easy; and my burden, light.

C H A P.
XII.

1.

Soon after this a remarkable instance happened of that malice, which Jesus had just been describing.

2. He was walking through a corn-field, with his disciples; who being hungry, rubbed out, and eat, some of the ears of corn. This the Pharisees observing, were greatly offended—not because the disciples had taken what belonged to another, for they had done only what the law allowed—but because they had broken the sabbath; on which day the thing happened.

9. 4. 5. Jesus told them they were stricter than even the law itself; and reminded them of the case of David, and the shew-bread; and likewise of the necessary ministration of the priests in the temple on the sabbath. Besides, he told them, that his disciples at least were blameless, as acting under his authority, which might dispence with the sabbath; adding, that they would have been less forward

27. The original words, *no man knoweth the Son, but the Father*, certainly shew great mysteriousness in the nature, and office of Christ; and should check much of the impertinence of human explication.

2. Deut. xxiii. 25.

3. 1 Sam. xxi. 6.

5. Numb. xxviii. 9.

7. Our Saviour by *placing the observance of the sabbath, among the works of the law*, is thought by some learned men, to consider the sabbath as a Mosaic institution. But it is more generally conceived, from its being sanctified at the creation; and strongly alluded to in the patriarchal history, that it was earlier than the law.—The determination however is of little consequence to Christians; for all agree, that the sabbath lays a divine obligation on them.

in their reproof, if they had understood the meaning of the expression, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; that is, God every where lays the stress, rather on acts of piety, and charity, than on forms, and ceremonies.

Not long after, on a similar occasion, the Pharisees shewed an instance of the same malicious temper. Jesus was teaching on the sabbath in a synagogue, where was a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees observing he was about to heal him, asked, with a malicious intention, whether it were lawful to do a work of that kind on the sabbath? Is there one among you, replied Jesus, so strict, as not to relieve his beast from a pit on the sabbath? And is it not equally allowable, to relieve a man in his distress? Then turning to the cripple, he bade him stretch out his hand; which was instantly restored.

The Pharisees vexed, and disappointed; and not daring to attack him openly because of the people, endeavoured in private to contrive his destruction.

Jesus, in the mean time, knowing their malice, retired to another place; and great multitudes following him, he healed their sick; but ordered them not to make him known; thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, which pointed out the *quietness*, as well as *mercy*, which accompanied all his actions. *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will pour my*

16. One thing in our blessed Saviour's conduct seems very evident, tho not enough perhaps taken notice of; that in many of his actions, he seems to have intended merely to set an example to others; when obviously those actions appear to terminate in himself. Thus when he ordered those, on whom he wrought miracles, to conceal the matter; he probably meant only a lesson of humility. And in the present case, when he retired from the Pharisees, and wished to conceal himself from them, he meant it only perhaps as a lesson of prudence. He might have availed himself of his divine power, and at any time have eluded them by a miracle: but this would have been no lesson to his followers. See note on Matt. viii. 4.

17. Isaiah xlii. 1.

spirit

19. spirit upon him, and he shall open the knowledge of truth to the gen-
 20. tiles. Quietness and peace shall mark his paths: he shall raise the fallen,
 21. and afflicted, till truth at length shall universally triumph; and all the
 gentiles shall trust in his name.

22. Some time after, Jesus again drew on himself the malice of the
 Pharisees, on the following occasion. He had healed a blind, and
 23. dumb man, who had also been possessed with an evil spirit. This
 miracle had been much celebrated; and the people scrupled not,
 24. every where, to declare him to be the Messiah. The Pharisees
 hearing of it, came from Jerusalem to quiet these rumours by in-
 stilling into the people, that Jesus cast out devils by means of a con-
 25. 26. 27. federacy with them. Jesus asked them, How they thought it possible
 for the devil to league against himself? Besides, said he, if I cast out
 devils through a combination with devils, through whom do your

20. Flax was used by the Jews in lamps. *Smoking flax* therefore is equivalent to an *expiring lamp*; and conveys the same idea as a *bruised reed*.—*Till he send forth judgment unto victory*. i. e. till he establish his religion.

24. See Mark iii. 22.

27. This is a difficult passage. It seems to appear not only from Josephus, and other Jewish writers, but also from the scriptures themselves, that the Jews used sometimes to cast out devils by exorcism. If they did it by the power of God, their miracles seem to depreciate those of our Saviour.—But I suppose the case to be this. These exorcisms were similar to the ancient oracles; and were a sort of juggle, or confederacy, between men, and evil spirits, which before Christianity, we have much reason to believe was the case. At the same time, as the Delphic priest pretended to divine authority; so also did the Jewish exorcist. Our Saviour therefore well knowing that the Pharisees would never allow the exorcist to derive his power from evil spirits; desires only that the same supposition may be made for him.—It is probable also, that our Saviour's dispossession of an evil spirit, and an exorcist's, might differ in this, that, in the former case, the evil spirits could never return; see Mark ix. 25. In the latter the cure might be temporary.

Others again are of opinion, that the Jewish exorcism was merely a *juggling attempt*. We find, in fact, that at least it sometimes failed, as in the case of Sceva's sons. (Acts xix. 13.) And it seems probable, that if the exorcists could have acted by their own power, they would have made no attempts in the name of Christ; as we find they did.—There remains a difficulty however on every supposition.

friends cast them out? If you do not suppose them to make such a confederacy; surely you carry your malice against me to a very unreasonable length by supposing me to do so. If then you are forced to allow, that I cast out devils by the power of God; you must also allow, that the religion I preach, comes from God. I have plainly shewn you, that I am stronger than the devil, by dispossessing him. As our aims therefore are wholly different, you may judge what mine is, by it's opposition to his. Since therefore the divine authority, by which I act, is so fully apparent, he who through malice ascribes these works to the devil, can have no stronger means of conviction. He cannot be more hardened; and therefore this is the most difficult of all sins to be washed away by repentance, and pardon. Make then the tree good, if you expect to have the fruit so. Rectify your hearts. The tree, and it's fruits do not more agree, than a man's heart, and his conversation. The good heart as naturally throws out virtuous sentiments, as the bad one does uncleanness, and blasphemy. And be well assured, that your wicked words shall be called into question, at the last judgment, with the same strictness, as your wicked actions.

29. This verse, I think, may be used as an argument against those, who do not allow these to be real possessions.

30. The more obvious meaning of this verse, is, that in *Christ's kingdom there is no medium: we must either be the subjects or the enemies of it.* But this sense does not so easily connect with the context.

31. Nobody can suppose, considering the whole tenor of Christianity, that there can be any sin, which on repentance may not be forgiven. This therefore seems only a strong way of expressing the difficulty of such repentance; and the impossibility of forgiveness without it. Such an expression occurs Mat. xix. 24. *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven;* that is, it is very difficult. That the Pharisees were not beyond the reach of forgiveness on their repentance, seems to be plain from ver. xli, where the repentance of the men of Nineveh is held out to them for an example.

36. The word *αργον* (unworking) signifies, *wicked*, according to the Jewish idiom.

38. While Jesus was thus speaking, some of the Pharisees desired he would shew them a sign from heaven, as a proof of his divine authority.
39. You have had signs enough already, said Jesus, to convince you.
40. No farther sign shall be given you, except that of the prophet Jonas. As Jonas was restored to light, after he had been three days in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be raised, after remaining three days in the earth. But as Jonas is a *type*, let the men of Nineveh be an *example* to you. They repented at the preaching of Jonas, who performed no miracle among them: but you turn a deaf ear to one, who teaches you under the manifest authority of
41. God. The queen of Sheba took a long journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon; while you reject the voice of heavenly wisdom itself,
42. which even cries in your streets.—When an evil spirit, having been cast out of a man, returns to him again, accompanied with other evil spirits; the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.
43. 44. 45. Such is the case of this wicked generation.
-

38. The expectation of the sign, which the Jews required, seems to have been founded principally on Dan. vii. 13. in which the son of man is mentioned, as coming on the clouds of heaven; and reducing all nations under his dominion.

40. Here Jesus predicts his resurrection, which was the last, and greatest sign he meant to give; on which his apostles always in their preaching, laid the greatest stress. To the Pharisees, it would not only be a great sign in itself; but would still be a greater sign, from its having been predicted. The wonderful circumstance too of Jonah's case, would, from its being thus a type of a great event, which should afterwards take place, appear in a new light. If an event so wonderful as the resurrection of Christ, was predicted by any type, or sign, it could only be predicted by one, which was itself also of a wonderful nature.

42. Queen of *Sheba*, or *Saba*, in Arabia Felix, which lies south of Judea. This country being bounded by the sea, is called the *uttermost part of the earth*.

43. *He walketh through dry places*, says the text: it should be, *it walketh through dry places* (desert places) that is, the evil spirit walketh, not the man.—The best interpretation, I think, of this passage, is, that the Jews, who were once the favourite people of God, and had had the evil spirits, as it were, driven out of them by the law of Moses; had now become more impenitent, and more hardened, than the Gentiles themselves.

As Jesus was thus discoursing with the Pharisees, his mother, and others of his relations desired to speak with him. Jesus taking this opportunity, as he did all others, of giving his hearers an instructive lesson, said, These indeed are my natural relations; but I consider those chiefly as my relations, who do the will of God, and have a spiritual, rather than an earthly connection with me.

46, 47.

C H A P.
XIII.

1, 2.

Soon after, as Jesus was teaching the people by the side of the lake, and found the croud gathering round him, he got into a boat, and pushing a little from the shore, placed himself so as to be commodiously heard; and thus delivered instructions to them under similitudes.

3.

A husbandman, said he, sowing his grounds, dropped some of the seeds on the beaten path; where they found no soil; but lay exposed, and were soon picked up by birds. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, just covered with a slight surface of earth: they rooted themselves indeed; but having no depth, when the sun grew hot, they withered. Others again fell among weeds, which soon choked, and destroyed them. But such as fell on good ground, properly prepared to receive them, flourished and produced fruit in great abundance. Having delivered this parable to the people, he recommended to each of them the particular application of it.

4.

5, 6.

7.

8.

9.

Here his disciples inquired, why he did not address himself more plainly to the people; and intimated, that the parable was not sufficiently plain even to them.

10.

To you, answered Jesus, I can explain the mysteries of the gospel with great openness; to them I cannot. Your sincerity enables you to receive more and more instruction: while their blindness, and

11.

12.

2. If the shore were elevated, as it probably might be, and formed a kind of semicircular bay, the people might range themselves round it, as in an amphitheatre, and hear with great advantage.

13. ignorance, and hardness of heart shut them out from that knowledge, which they might otherwise receive. I apply to them therefore in parables, that they may be, as it were, their own instructors—that they may see, without perceiving that they see—and hear, without knowing that they hear. For as the prophet Isaiah says of them, They have hardened their hearts; they have shut their ears, and closed their eyes; so as to prevent, as much as they can, my drawing them to repentance. But your dispositions are of a different kind: therefore you are blessed with a revelation of those things, which patriarchs, and prophets have desired in vain to see, and hear.

18, 19. With regard to the parable of the sower, continued Jesus, the beaten path represents those, whose hard impenitent hearts would not suffer the word to enter. The shallow soil spread over a rock, holds out such, as, on hearing the truth, receive it eagerly, and seem in earnest; but persecution arising, like a scorching sun, they fall away. Again, the weedy ground represents those, who endeavour to accommodate their religion to the world: but the pleasures, and cares of life generally prevail, and choke the better part. Lastly,

13. Another sense of this passage may be, *that if the gospel had been preached plainly to them, they could not have understood it.* It follows therefore, that it was better to preach it in parables; which might afterwards be a convincing proof, both to them and others, when they came to understand them more clearly.

15. This quotation, which our Saviour makes from Isaiah, appears at sight, as if God hardened the hearts of men, on purpose to prevent their conversion; but it is common for God to speak by his prophets, of events, that would fall out, in a manner as if he had enjoined them. See Bp. Lowth's note on Is. vi. 9.

23. The *wicked lives of Christians* are sometimes urged as an argument against Christianity; but so unjustly, that, in fact, the wicked lives of Christians are an argument of *its truth*. Here is a parable, describing the future times of the gospel (which may therefore be considered as prophetic,) from which it seems to appear, that three parts, out of four, of mankind will reject its salutary influence.

the good foil is an emblem of those, in whom the gospel takes firm rooting; and having no obstruction, gives a copious produce.

Jesus still continuing his discourse to the people, illustrated the future state of the gospel under the following similitude. 24.

A husbandman, said he, sowed good seed in his field: among which his enemy scattered tares in the night. The mischief at first was unperceived; but the corn no sooner grew up, than the tares appeared also. The servants of the husbandman wished them to be weeded out. But he forbade it; saying, Let them alone at present. Let all be reaped together at harvest; and I will then order the reapers to bind the tares, and the corn in separate bundles—the one to be burned, the other to be laid up in my granery. 25.
26.
27, 28.
29, 30.

In another parable Jesus thus illustrated the progress of the Christian religion. It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which when sown, is among the least of all seeds; but its growth is more prodigious, than that of any other; in as much as it becomes a tree, and affords shelter even to the fowls of the air. 31, 32.

The same representation, carried somewhat further, Jesus gave under another similitude. The gospel, said he, is like a small portion of leaven; which being covered with a large quantity of meal, is not seen at first; but beginning to ferment, by degrees spreads over the whole mass. 33.

24. St. Matthew represents the disciples as breaking in upon our Saviour's discourse to the people; which he probably does with a view of placing the parable, and the explanation of it together. But we find from St. Mark, that *Jesus was alone*, when the disciples asked the explanation.

32. In eastern countries, this plant grows to an enormous size.

33. This parable may be considered, as a kind of prophecy, that the gospel should in time, overspread the whole world; and the parables of this texture (as we have several of a prophetic cast) were obscure at first; yet on their completion, they certainly tend greatly to confirm the gospel.

Thus

34, 35. Thus Jesus instructed the people, as they were able to bear instruction: and thus fulfilled the prophecy of David, *I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter dark sayings of old.*

36. Then Jesus dismissing the multitude, retired into a house with his disciples, and at their desire, explained to them the parable of the tares.

37. By the sower, he told them, was meant Christ—the field was the
 38. world—the corn represented good Christians—the tares, finners—
 39. the enemy was the devil—the harvest, the end of the world—and
 40, 41. the reapers, the angels. As the tares therefore were gathered up,
 42, 43. and burnt; so, at the conclusion of all things, the angels should separate the good from the bad: and while these should be condemned to a place of punishment, those should be conveyed to regions of happiness. And let mankind, said he, seriously attend to these great truths! The more they attend to them, the more they shall find them the support of all their hopes. For the gospel, added he, is like treasure hid in a field. He that finds it, transported with joy, sells all he has to purchase so valuable a possession. It is like a gem
 45, 46. of infinite price, which the merchant runs every risk to possess.
 47, 48. And well may it be considered of infinite price: for on it depend all
 49, 50. your hopes, and fears. It is that great net thrown into the sea, which incloses of every kind. When it is drawn on shore, a sepa-

34. See Mark iv. 33.

35. Pf. lxxviii. 2.

44. In the under parts of our Saviour's parables, there is sometimes the *appearance* of an immoral tendency; as in the commendation bestowed on the *unjust steward*. Here it seems against the principles of equity for a man to conceal from the possessor, the unknown value of a field, which he had accidentally discovered; that he might purchase it himself at an under-price.—But we want common sense only as a commentator on such passages, as these. Common sense shews us at once, that the instruction is not meant to be conveyed in any of these *under-parts* and *trivial circumstances*: but in the *general scope* only of the whole parable.

ration shall be made—the good shall be preserved; and the refuse destroyed.

Jesus then asked his disciples, if they fully understood the meaning of all he had said? On their answering, they had; he bad them lay up then in their memories what they had heard; and imitate the prudent house-holder, who from his stores produces to his guests, according to their several conditions, such things, as are best accommodated to each. 51, 52.

After this, Jesus leaving Capernaum, went to Nazareth; where, according to his usual custom, he preached in the synagogue. Here he was received in a manner, very different from what he might have expected. His countrymen, who had known him from his youth, blinded entirely by his earthly connections, would not acknowledge his divine original. Whence hath he obtained, said they, this mighty wisdom? we are well acquainted with all his relations; and all the opportunities he hath had: we can never therefore believe, that he can be the mighty person he pretends to be. 53, 54, 55,
56, 57, 58.

Jesus told them, it was only in his own country, in which a prophet was received with dishonour: and finding the infidelity of the people of Nazareth such, as could not at present be wrought on, he left them after performing a few miracles among them.

By this time the fame of Jesus, having spread through every part of Judea, had reached the ears of Herod; who, under the terrors of CHAP.
XIV.
1, 2, 3, 4,
5.

55. *His brethren.* Ἀδελφοί has a more extensive sense. So among the Latins.

Frater erat, fraterna peto——

58. It is reasonable to believe, that our Saviour never performed a miracle, but where he foresaw, it might have a good effect in a religious light, either on the person, on whom it was performed; or on the spectators; thus making one act of mercy lead to another.

1. *Tetrarch* signifies a prince over a fourth part of a country. This Tetrarch was the son of Herod the great; who was succeeded by his three sons, Archilaus in Judæa; and Herod, and Philip in the other parts of his dominions. Thus Tacitus, *liberi Herodis repartitiò rexere.*

of a guilty conscience, declared Jesus could be no other, than John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded, and who had arisen from the dead.

This wicked prince had long lived in a state of incest with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for which John, with a proper freedom, had rebuked him. Herod unable to bear, what appeared to him, so great an insult, imprisoned John; and would have put him to death, had he not stood in awe of the people, who looked upon John as a prophet. It happened however at a solemn feast, held on Herod's birth-day, that the daughter of Herodias danced before the king, and his company, in a manner so engaging to Herod, that he promised with an oath, to bestow on her whatever she should ask. So inviting an opportunity demanded consideration. She advised with her mother; who ordered her to ask the head of John the Baptist. The king after expressing some concern for the necessity his oath had laid upon him, complied at length with the request. The head was brought, and presented to Herodias, who carried it to her mother. After the execution, the disciples of John were permitted to bury the corpse; and when they had discharged this office, they came to Jesus with the mournful account; looking on him now as their only master.

rexere. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 9.—But still there is great difficulty about that *Philip*, who was Herodias's first husband; as Josephus calls him *Herod*. Dr. Lardner, shews (in the first vol. of his Cred.) that Herod the Great having several other sons, by different wives, who continued private persons, it was probably to one of them, to whom Herodias was first married: and his name (as Lardner shews from other similar instances) might be Philip Herod.

11. It is to this day a practice in the courts of eastern princes, to produce the head of a criminal, to evince his death.

12. It does not absolutely appear from the text, that the *disciples of John looked on Jesus, as their only master*. It seems probable however from this, and other passages. And so far as the probability goes, it is a good comment on the beginning of the eleventh chapter; as it shews, that the design of John, on that occasion, was answered.

Soon after this, Jesus imbarking on the lake, sailed along the shore; and landed in a solitary place with his disciples. But his motions could not be concealed; and great multitudes followed him by land; whom he graciously received; and healed the sick they brought with them. 13. 14.

As evening drew on, his disciples put him in mind of the solitary place, they were in; and of the difficulty the people might find in providing food, if they were not soon dismissed. Jesus inquired, what provision they had; and being informed they had five loaves, and two fishes, he ordered the people to sit down in ranks; and taking the bread, and the fish, and giving thanks, he brake them in pieces, and gave portions of them to his disciples, to distribute among the people; thus the whole multitude, consisting of five thousand men, besides women, and children, not only satisfied their hunger; but left behind fragments sufficient to fill twelve baskets. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21.

Jesus then ordered his disciples to imbare; and leave him to dismiss the people; which having done, he enjoyed a short interval of private devotion. 22. 23. 24.

Night was now come on, and the boat, in which the disciples had imbarek, was struggling with a boisterous, and adverse wind. Jesus, thinking this a proper opportunity to impress upon them by 25.

13. It does not appear, that this intelligence, as the text seems to lead, was *the reason* of Jesus's retreating to a solitary place; as there is no intimation given of his apprehending any danger from Herod. Some connect the 13th verse with the 2d, and consider all the intervening verses, in a parenthesis.

13. Πιξν has this meaning, rather than *on foot* as our translation has it. A person might travel πιξν, and yet either on *horse-back*, or in a *carriage*.

Εἰ διδῶναις πιξν, παρὰ τοῖς διφ.

Odyf. γ. 325.

If you chuse to go *by land*, you may have a *chariot*.

25. Our Saviour's miracles, I think, may be classed into three kinds—such as attended the solemnity of his birth, and death; to which I add his resurrection, and ascension—such

by a miracle the great principle of faith, and of putting their trust in God, which was ever among his first instructions, went to them, walking on the surface of the lake. The disciples not knowing him at first through the shades of night, supposed it was a spirit. But
 26. Jesus speaking to them, composed their fears. On this Peter,
 27. with more confidence than the rest, called out to Jesus for per-
 28. mission to come to him. Jesus giving him leave, he made the
 29. 30. attempt: but seeing the waves boisterous, his heart failed; and
 31. feeling himself begin to sink, he cried out. Jesus reaching his
 32. 33. hand to him, intimated that his miscarriage was owing solely to
 his want of faith. The wind ceased, as they entered the boat; and
 all who were in it, were so much struck with the miracle, that they
 fell down on their knees before Jesus, and acknowledged him to be
 the son of God.

as conveyed benefits to mankind; of which the bulk of his miracles consisted—and such as were mere appeals to the senses of men, without such *apparent* benefit.

Of the miracles of this last class, we have very few instances. Only three, I think, can be mentioned—the curbing of the fig-tree—the devils sent into the swine—and this of Jesus's walking on the sea: unless to these we add the money taken out of the fish's mouth.

Wise reasons, no doubt, there were for all these miracles; tho they are not so apparent to us.—With regard to the present miracle, it was a common eastern custom to instruct by *signs*, or *actions*, as making the strongest impression. Thus Ahijah rent Jeroboam's mantle, to denote the revolt of the tribes. Thus also the rejection of Saul was signified by the rending of Samuel's garment; and thus Agabus binding himself with Paul's girdle, predicted the imprisonment of that apostle. Numerous instances of the same kind might be produced. This of Jesus's walking on the sea is one. His suffering Peter to leave the boat, was well calculated at least as a test of his faith, and was a beautiful illustration of its effects. According to his faith, he found himself to *rise*, or *sink*.—It might also be considered as an instance of Jesus's *power over nature*. *Two feet walking on water*, was an Egyptian hieroglyphic to denote *impossibility*; and Job reckons it among the characteristics of the Almighty, *to tread upon the waves of the sea*; Job. ix. 8. If we consider the miracle before us, in these lights, it receives additional dignity, and weight.

33. The expression *they who were in the boat*, seems rather to imply the *boatmen*, than the *disciples*; which latter word is generally used, when none else are meant.

Jesus

Jesus, soon after, landed in Genesareth, where the inhabitants hearing of his arrival, quickly dispersed intelligence through the country; and multitudes of people flocking round him, begged only to touch the hem of his garment: and none came without finding the expected relief. 34, 35, 36.

C H A P.

XV.

1.

The fame of Jesus was now so great, that the doctors of the Jewish law thought it expedient, if possible, to put a stop to it. The best ground, which they imagined they could take, was in the matter of traditions. If they could convince the people, that he despised that strictness, which they themselves professed, they had no doubt, but they should diminish his popularity. With this view a body of them came to him from Jerusalem; and told him, they had observed, with much surprize, that his disciples were brought up in the neglect of all those traditions, which had been delivered to them by their forefathers—that for instance, it was an admirable security against every possible defilement, to wash their hands constantly before a meal; but his disciples, they took notice, observed no such purification. 2.

Jesus asked them, how they could find fault with his disciples for neglecting those traditions, which in so many instances contradicted the laws of God? The commandment, said he, for instance, enjoins 3.

36. If these were the Gergasenes, as some suppose, who desired (Mat. viii. 34) that *he should depart from their coasts*, their faith seems, by this time, to have increased greatly.

1. Josephus tells us (Antiq. xviii. 10) that the Pharisees appointed many strict observances, which were not in the law; and had violent disputes with the Sadducees, on subjects of this kind. The men of fashion, and free thinkers, (the historian observes,) sided with the Sadducees: but *των φαρισαίων το πλῆθος συμμαχόν εκόντων*, *the body of the people admired the Pharisees*.

2. Every thing *separated to a religious use*, among the Jews, was *αγιον*, *holy*. Every thing else was *κοινον* *common*, profane, unholy. Thus as food was sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving; it was among the *αγια*; and therefore was not to be touched with unpurified hands.—The rabbins boast of a great martyr to this religious opinion, the rabbi Akiba; who, being confined in prison, and having but a small quantity of water allowed, chose rather to die of thirst, than to omit washing his hands.

5. 6. you to reverence, and assist your parents. But your traditions speak a different language. If, instead of assisting your parents with any part of your substance, you dedicate it to the use of the temple, the
 7. , 9. divine command is at once superseded.—You hypocrites, examine the prophet's description; and see how far you may apply it to yourselves: This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth; and honoureth me with their lips; while their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me; *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*†.

10. 11. Then speaking to the people, as they stood round him, he told them, they might be assured, it was not what entered into the mouth, which defiled a man; but what proceeded from the heart.

12. Soon after, when Jesus was alone with his disciples, they told him, they understood, that the Pharisees were grievously offended at what he had said to them.

13. Jesus bad them not be afraid of any consequences, that should arise from their displeasure. Such plants only, said he, as my heavenly
 14. father hath planted, shall be suffered to increase. Fear them not. Their pernicious doctrine, and all that are led by it, shall come to nothing.

15. Peter then intimating, that he, and his fellow-disciples did not clearly understand what Jesus had said about defiling the man, desired a farther
 16. explanation of it. Jesus expressing his surprize at the slowness of their
 17. 18. 19. understanding, bad them consider, that what *entered into* the man, affected only the body, and could not possibly affect the mind; so that
 20. there could be no immorality in eating with unwashten hands.—But what *proceeded from* the heart, wicked thoughts, and wicked actions of every kind, were the only things, that could defile the man.

9. Isa. xxix. 13.

† The papists seem fond of applying some passages in favor of oral tradition, which we think have no reference to it; but this paragraph seems directly to apply.

Soon after, Jesus went into the country bordering on Tyre, and Sidon, where a Canaanitish woman, a heathen, coming to him, and addressing him by the name of the son of David, besought him to heal her daughter, who was possessed by an evil-spirit. Jesus at first taking no notice of her, his disciples desired him to dismiss her, as she clamoured after them. But he, intending, she should discover that faith, which he knew she possessed, told her, his office, and design led him only, at present, to assist the house of Israel. On her still persisting to extort favour from him, he added, that it was not right to take what was thus designed for the children, and give it to dogs. It was true, she replied; but it could not injure the children, if the dogs picked up the offals from their table. An answer so clearly comprehending the power, and office of the Messiah, drew from Jesus the warmest approbation of her faith, together with an assurance, that she should find her daughter perfectly recovered on her return.

From the borders of Tyre and Sidon Jesus went again to the lake of Genesareth; and seeing the multitudes thronging round, with a number of sick, and infirm people, he retired to a rising ground; and healing their disorders, he raised in the multitude a spirit of praise, and adoration to God for his mercies to them.

Then calling his disciples, he told them he had compassion on the multitude, as they had now been with him three days; and must have consumed their provision; so that if he should send them home fasting, he feared the consequences.

22. Why a heathen should call Jesus by the name of the son of David, does not so easily appear. She might have heard him so called. She was certainly, if not convinced, at least, in the way of conviction.

26. *Dog* was a common term, by which the Jews used to denote *the heathen*. Our Saviour uses it here, not in the way of reproach, but only to assist his argument.

33. The disciples remarked, as they had done before, the difficulty of supplying such a multitude with food in the wilderness. But Jesus
 34, 35, 36, finding they had seven loaves, and a few small fishes, ordered the
 37. people to sit down; and giving thanks, he distributed the bread, and fish among them, through the hands of his disciples; and the
 38. offals, after they were all satisfied, filled seven baskets; tho the multitude consisted of more than four thousand people. He then dismissed them, and went himself into the country of Magdala.

C H A P.
XVI.

1.

In this place some of the Pharisees, and Sadducees, once more desired him to give them a sign from heaven, as a confirmation of his divine authority. You judge of fair weather, and foul, said Jesus, by the appearance of the sky: is it not just as easy for you, if you were so disposed, to look into the prophets, and see in them the signs of the Messiah?—But with a people so hardened, no signs avail: nor shall I give you any sign, but, as I told you, on a like occasion, the sign of the prophet Jonas.

2, 3.

4.

5, 6, 7, 8, 9,
10, 11, 12.

Jesus, having said this, left them abruptly; and taking boat with his disciples, passed over the lake. On their passage alluding to the conversation he had just had, he bad them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and Sadducees. They however not well understanding him, and recollecting they had forgotten to take provision, thought he had alluded to that neglect. Jesus having first rebuked their inat-

33. The thoughtless infidelity of the disciples, after they had seen their master so lately feed five thousand people with five loaves, and two fishes, would have been beyond all belief, if our Saviour himself had not, on all occasions, spoken of it in the most pointed terms; *O ye of little faith.—O faithless and perverse generation—If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed.* From these expressions we can conceive nothing, but such grossness as is here described. Indeed it was not till after our Saviour's death, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, that the disciples assumed those great and noble characters, which strike us with such admiration. They were yet but *mere men*; they became afterwards *inspired apostles*.—See the preface to the acts of the apostles.

4. See chap. xii. 32.

tention,

ention, and put them in mind of the two great miracles of multiplying provisions, which he had just wrought; explained his meaning to them; and shewed them how the corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees might well be compared to leaven.

Jesus then went into the parts about Cæsarea Philippi, and intending now to give his disciples a clearer view of the Messiah's kingdom, he began by asking them, (as they had lately been travelling, and preaching through the country) what opinion men, in general, had conceived of him? The disciples said, the opinions of men were various; some thought him John the Baptist—others Elijah—while many thought him Jeremiah, or some other of the prophets. Jesus proceeded to ask them their own sentiments about him. Peter with great vehemence cried out, he firmly believed him to be the Messiah. Jesus commending this confession of his faith, told him, the perfect knowledge of this great truth depended entirely on the revelation of God's will. This truth, added Jesus,

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

13. There were two places of the name of Cæsarea. The first was a sea-port of note on the Mediterranean; which had been rebuilt by Herod the great; and named in honour of Augustus Cæsar. This is the town so often mentioned in the Acts of the apostles. But the town here meant, was an inland-town built by Philip the Tetrarch, who named it Cæsarea in honour of Tiberius Cæsar; and added his own name to it, by way of distinction.

13. Bowyer conjectures, that the passage, at the end of this verse, should be pointed thus. *Whom do men say that I am? The son of man?*

14. The Jews had a notion, that Jeremiah should at some time appear to recover the ark of the covenant, which he had hid. See 2 Macc. ii. 5.

18. Some interpreters consider *Peter himself* as the *rock*, on which Christ should found his church; because he was the first teacher among the Gentiles. And indeed the words naturally give this sense; which is agreeable also to other scriptural expressions, as that of Ephes. ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles.* At the same time, the *sense* is more consistent, when we consider *Peter's confession* as the rock; as if our Saviour had said, (alluding to the custom of building castles, and citadels on rocks) the great truth, that I am the Messiah, is the foundation of the Christian religion.—If the former sense be taken, it is however equally applicable to all the apostles: See Mat. xviii. 18, and John xx. 23,

alluding

alluding to Peter's name, is that great rock, on which I mean
 19, 20. to establish my church to the end of time. To you, my disciples, I give the power of unlocking, as it were, and opening, the mysteries of the gospel; and inspired, as you shall be, by the Holy Ghost, whatever you shall declare to be my will on earth, shall be confirmed in heaven. At the same time Jesus ordered his disciples not to mention, at present to the people, the great truth of his being the Messiah; desiring rather that they should themselves collect it from what they heard, and saw †.

21. Jesus having now made a plain discovery of himself to his disciples, proceeded a step farther, and opened some of those great
 22. truths with regard to his sufferings, and death. But Peter, who had gained only a general notion of the Messiah's office, could not bear these humiliating ideas, and expressed himself with his usual
 23. warmth against them. This drew upon him a severe rebuke from Jesus, as a person darkened with worldly prejudices, which opposed the whole scheme of the gospel.

24. Jesus proceeded to tell them, that it was not the Messiah alone who should be ill-treated by a wicked world, but that all his fol-
 25. lowers must expect the same treatment. The world indeed, said he, will become the great test of the sincerity of men. The contention will lie between the indulgences of their lives, and the salvation of their souls. But they, who think justly on this interesting subject,
 26. will see the great difference between the two objects, and will think the happiness of the next world should not be risked for the sake

19. This seems to be the sense of the words binding and loosing, which was a proverbial expression among the Jews; and certainly relates to *things*; not to *persons*, as the papists construe it. *Things*, not *persons*, are evidently alluded to in the parallel places of Matthew (xviii. 18.)

—*Giving the keys*, seems to be an allusion to a custom among the Jews of giving a key to their rabbies, when they were admitted to expound the scripture.

† See Mat. xi. 4. 5.

22. *Be it far from thee, Lord!* ἰλωὺς σοι. *Mercy on thee!*

23. The word *Satan* signifies here an *enemy*, or *opposer*.

of any enjoyments, or advantages, in this—always remembering the strict account they must give at the great day, when the son of man shall judge the world. And tho the Messiah's kingdom, added he, which throws so strong a light on the next world, may appear now at a distance; yet you may be assured, that it shall speedily be established, and in a great degree even in the life-time of some of you, who stand round me.

27.

28.

C H A P.
XVII.

1.

Jesus having opened these things to his disciples, and given them so humiliating a view of the sufferings of the Messiah, thought it proper to exalt their hopes, by giving them also a foretaste of his glory. With this intention he led Peter, James, and John, to the summit of a lofty mountain; where suddenly, as they were praying, his countenance assumed the brightness of the sun, and a splendid, and glorious light invested him. On his right, and left, stood the two great prophets of the law, Moses, and Elijah, in the same resplendent form, and entered into conversation with him.

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The disciples were rather transported, than terrified, at this glorious vision; and Peter cried out, Lord! what happiness is this! let us endeavour to fix this ravishing scene, and erect tabernacles for its reception.

28. This is a difficult passage. As the Messiah's coming is introduced here, immediately after mentioning the last judgment, many of the early Christians conceived these words to be a prediction of the speedy end of the world. When the event began to disprove that interpretation, it was next conceived, that these words held out the destruction of Jerusalem. If they do, it is certainly rather abruptly introduced; and not so easy, I think, as the interpretation here given.

3. It is generally supposed, that this vision was exhibited in the night, as St. Luke says the disciples were *heavy with sleep*; and likewise, that they came down from the mountain *the next day*. If this was the case, the night would add greatly to the grandeur, and resplendency of the vision.

5. While he was speaking, an awful voice issuing from the cloud, proclaimed : This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.

6. Overpowered by the grandeur of the whole transaction, the disciples fell to the ground ; on which Jesus reached out his hand to raise them. When they looked up, the vision was gone, and they saw Jesus standing with them alone, as before.

9. As they descended the mountain, Jesus forbade them to mention what they had seen, till after his resurrection ; as this vision was at present intended only for their use.

10. While they continued to descend, the disciples, musing on what they had seen, and heard, and thinking this the greatest sign, which Jesus had yet shewn of his being the Messiah, had still one scruple. The Jews universally believed, that Elijah should precede the Messiah, in some glorious manner ; and as he had now appeared in such splendor, a publication of it, they thought might tend to convince them. Jesus pointed out the mistaken notion the Jews had of that prophecy, which mentioned the coming of Elijah, and
11. 12. of

5. The last words of this voice, are supposed to allude to the predictions of Moses. Deut. xviii. 15.

8. The faith of Peter is here represented exactly like the faith of meaner Christians — subject to various paroxysms. On Jesus's asking, what his opinion of him was ? his faith appeared raised to the greatest height. When Jesus mentioned his death, and sufferings ; it sank. But on the sight of this glorious vision, it rose again. Thus the apostles themselves, and meaner Christians of course, have occasion frequently to cry, *Lord, increase our faith !* Happy is he, whose faith having surmounted all obstacles, is at length invariably fixed.

9. Why Peter, James, and John were favoured on this, and other occasions, we are not given to understand ; nor have we any ground for conjecture. We need not however suppose, that the transfiguration of Jesus, was intended to be concealed from the other apostles. — One thing is very obvious ; it is certainly a great argument of the truth and simplicity of Matthew, to relate the preference of others to himself.

11. The expression, *shall come, and restore all things*, (which is spoken in the future tense, after the death of John the Baptist,) has led some interpreters to conceive, that Elijah should precede

of that splendid restoration of things, which they expected; and informed his disciples, that Elijah had already appeared—that he had made that preparation for the Messiah; and had suffered that treatment, which the prophets had foretold—and that the treatment of the Messiah himself should be exactly the same.—This character of the prophetic Elijah easily led the disciples to conceive, that he meant John the Baptist. 13.

When they returned to the foot of the mountain, they found a great croud; from which a person advancing, desired Jesus to have compassion on him. My son, said he, is grievously afflicted by an evil spirit, and I brought him to your disciples, hoping they would have healed him, but they could not. 14. 15. 16.

Jesus rebuking their infidelity, immediately healed the young man. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21.

Afterwards when he was alone with his disciples, they inquired, why they could not perform the miracle?

precede Christ's second coming, as well as his first. The learned Mr. Mede was of this opinion: and Milton, who was Mede's fellow-collegian, probably took the idea from him.

———The great Tifhbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to heaven, yet once again to come.

Par. Reg.

20. Dr. Clark paraphrases the original thus; *If you had never so little faith in comparison; and indeed the Jews made use of the word mustard-seed proverbially to express a little thing; as they did the phrase, remove a mountain, to express a great one. Yet, I think theirs is a better interpretation, who suppose it alludes to the increasing nature of a grain of mustard-seed, after it is sown. See Luke xvii. 5. in which the increasing nature of the seed, when sown, seems plainly alluded to; which, I think, is a sanction for our using it in this sense here.*

21. This verse affords an instance of the ingenuity of criticism. A learned writer (see enquiry into Demon. p. 47) instead of *εν προσευχη, και νητεια*, by *prayer and fasting*; would read (tho unauthorized,) *εν ποσειδι νητεια* by *constant fasting*, which he deemed the best cure for what he supposed an epileptic disorder. There might be some colour for this criticism, if the disciples had been enquiring about a *natural cure* of the disorder: but their question was, *Why could not we cast him out?*—Bowyer too, whose criticisms, I think, are often very refined, makes the same correction, as the author of the Enquiry.

Jesus told them, it was intirely owing to their want of faith. Faith, said he, like a grain of mustard-seed, sown in the earth, must be of an increasing nature. If your faith, said he, were of this kind, no miracle could exceed it's power; but God does not allow such miracles as these, to be wrought by any, whose hearts, and affections are not purified, and exalted by a thorough renunciation of the world, and an intercourse with heaven.

22. 23. As they returned into Galilee, Jesus reminded his disciples again, (as it was always his custom to repeat important lessons) that he should soon be delivered into the hands of his enemies, who should put him to death. At the same time he told them, that on the third day he should rise again. This promise however, so ill-understood by them at that time, did not much alleviate their sorrow.

24. 25. 26. As they entered Capernaum, they were met by a collector of the
27. temple-offerings; who asked Peter, whether his master paid that duty? Peter mentioned the matter to Jesus, who alluding to his being the son of God, for whose temple the offering was demanded, declared his right of exemption: Nevertheless, said he, that we may give no offence, go to the lake, and in the mouth of the first fish you take, you shall find a piece of money sufficient to satisfy the demand.

22. The last place where we find Jesus, was at Cæsarea Philippi (Mat. xvi. 13) which was a town on the borders of Iturea. From hence he went to Capernaum, through the upper Galilee, or *Gallilee of the Gentiles*

27. See a note on chap. xiv. 25, in which I have mentioned this miracle among those of the lowest class. It was certainly however a miracle adapted to fishermen; and might tend greatly to increase their faith.—Besides it would be difficult to say, how Jesus could with more propriety have obtained a supply. If he had created it on the spot, it might have had the appearance of a sort of legerdemain—or, it might have laid him open to the accusation of counterfeiting the current coin of the country.

1.

The glorious vision, that had just been displayed to the disciples, had not yet spiritualized their ideas. They had still very low conceptions of Christ's kingdom; and had contentions among themselves who should be the greatest.

To dispel these, Jesus took a child, and placing him before them, told them, that unless they purified their minds from all ambition, and worldly thoughts, and became in that respect like children, they were by no means properly disposed to be members of his kingdom. The way therefore, added he, to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, is to endeavour to come as near this pattern as possible. These are the persons whom I acknowledge as mine. He who receiveth such, receiveth me: but he, who purposely misleads, seduces, or persecutes them, draws on himself a heavy judgment. Offence, and falsehood will ever make a part of the trials of this world: but woe be to him, who gives the offence, and propagates the falsehood. Guard therefore against the temptations of the world, which are the principal causes of these mischiefs. Tho' it's pleasures, and vanities may be as dear to you, as a hand, or an eye; yet part with them freely, if you have any desire to receive the blessings of the gospel. And let it be your constant care to encourage, and draw to my fold, these innocent, and sincere searchers after truth. Of such gentle spirits consist the blessed inhabitants of heaven, whose souls the son of man came to redeem. As a shepherd looks after his straying flock, and receives

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2. This is another instance of the eastern mode of instructing by example. See note on chap. xiv. 15.

6. *Better for him that a mill-stone, &c.* Drowning with a weight about the criminal's neck, was customary; and became proverbial among the Jews for *inevitable ruin*.

10. The words of the text, *their angels do always behold the face of my father*, may bear another very good sense; intimating (in a Jewish mode of expression) that they are under the peculiar care of God's holy ministers; agreeably to the passage of St. Paul (Heb. i. 14.) *are they not ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?*

more joy from a lost sheep recovered, than from those that were safe; so your heavenly father receives his straying children, and enjoins all the ministers of his gospel to recover them to his fold.

15. 16. 17. And even after they become your brethren, be not too severe. You must use many means of exhortation with an offender, public, and private; before you can justify yourself in giving him up. But in
18. 19. 20. the mode of treating offenders, and other matters, such particular ordinances as you make for the government of the church under my general instructions, shall be established; and in all difficult cases be assured, that frequent prayer to God will influence his holy spirit to direct your consultations.

21. What Jesus had been saying with regard to *offences*, drew Peter to put a case to his master, with regard to the forgiveness of *injuries*.

22. To what extent, said he, are we to carry this duty? It has no limits, said Jesus. However often you are injured, if the signs of real penitence follow the offence, a christian is *always* bound to forgive. At
23. 24. 25. his own peril he withholds his forgiveness.—Jesus then gave his
26. 27. 28. disciples a plain representation of God's dealings with man in this
29. 30. 31. matter, in the following parable.
32. 33. 34.
35.

19. See Mat. xvi. 19.

19. 20. This seems clearly to relate to the miraculous interposition of heaven, in the affairs of the infant church.

24. 28. If we suppose the ten thousand talents, which the servant owed his master, were golden talents, the sum would arise to seventy-two millions of our money. And if by the hundred pence, are meant, as is probable, an hundred Roman denarii, the amount of them is £3. 2s. 6d. This calculation however, tho the talents were silver, shews our Saviour's opinion of the disparity between the offences, which we commit against God, and those, which we commit against each other.

34. Some commentators, to solve this seeming injustice of the master in *reclaiming* a debt, which he had formally *forgiven*, explain the conclusion of the 27th verse, as if the master had only delayed the exaction of the debt, which was all the servant required. But this circumstance does not at all concern the main point of the parable, to which only we need attend. See a note on Mat. xiii. 44.

A master,

A master, said he, calling his servants to an account, and finding one who owed him infinitely more, than he could possibly pay, ordered him, and his family to be sold, as the law allowed, in part of payment. The man falling on his knees, begged only a respite. His master pitying his wretched situation, forgave him. Yet this very man, going out from his master's presence, and finding a fellow-servant, who owed him only a trifling sum, treated him with violence, and notwithstanding all his intreaties threw him into prison. The matter presently came to his master's ears, who calling the ungrateful servant, after a severe expostulation imprisoned him, till his own immense debt should be discharged.—Such, added Jesus, is the manner, in which God will treat those, who indulge an implacable hatred against their brethren.

C H A P.
XIX.

1. 2.

After this Jesus went from Gallilee into Judea, where he was attended, as usual, with a multitude of people, whose disorders he healed.

Here some of the Pharisees came to him, inquiring, with insidious intention, whether it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause he pleased? Jesus reminded them of the original law of marriage at the creation; and of the indissoluble union, which it implied. They asked, why Moses then allowed divorces on various pretences? Jesus answered, that Moses allowed them to prevent worse consequences; but that God Almighty's law was still more ancient; and that in fact, whoever divorced his wife,

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3. The insidious intention of the Pharisees seems to have consisted in their reducing Jesus to the dilemma of denying his own avowed doctrine (Mat. v. 31) on one hand; or of contradicting the law of Moses (Deut. xxiv. 12) on the other; which the glosses of their rabbies made to allow great liberties in the matter of divorce.

9. Milton, who put away his wife for another cause, endeavours to justify himself by a singular interpretation of this text, which would open great latitude—*except for adultery, says he, or any thing, which would be to the husband as grievous, and intolerable as adultery.*

except

except for adultery, and married another, was himself an adulterer; and whoever married a woman thus put away, was an adulterer likewise.

10. The disciples afterwards pondering, on what Jesus had said, told him, they thought, if that were the case, it were better to abstain entirely from marriage.

11. 12. Jesus said, the necessities of the world were such, that men could not generally abstain: but when wife and good reasons intervened, they had an option.

13. 14. 15. As they were speaking, some people, through a great opinion of Jesus's holiness, brought young children to him, desiring, he would lay his hands on them, and bless them. The disciples rather discountenancing this, as an unseasonable interruption, Jesus interfered, and calling the children to him, took them in his arms, and blessed them. He then proposed them to the people, as he had done to his disciples a little before†, as patterns of that innocence, and purity, which he required in those, who were converts to the gospel.

16. Jesus soon afterwards was met by a young man, who accosting him under the title of *good master*, desired to know, what he was to do, to obtain eternal happiness? Jesus observing, that by this address, which belonged only to God, he seemed to acknowledge him to be the Messiah, told him, that the way to obtain eternal life, was to keep the commandments. The young man desired to know, which of the commandments? Jesus mentioned several; which
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† See Matt. xviii. 2.

18. Some commentators have wished, that our Saviour had been more ample in his advice to the young man, who enquired *the way to eternal life*. He gives him no instructions with regard to faith; to the love of God; or the purifying his affections: He prohibits only a few gross crimes, and orders him to honour his parents; for the precept of *loving his neighbour* is suspected by many, particularly by Origen, to be interpolated; both as it is not one of the commandments, and as it is not mentioned in the parallel places of Mark (x. 19) and Luke (xviii. 20.)

the other with great promptness, declared he had observed from his youth. Jesus then told him, he would put his religion to the test. You have acknowledged me, said he, to be the Messiah: let me now see the strength of your faith. Give what you have to the poor; trust God for a treasure in heaven; and follow me. 20, 21.

The young man, not prepared for such a trial, retired in confusion; for he was very rich. 22.

Jesus observing to his disciples, as the young man departed, how very opposite the things of this world were to those of the next; You see, said he, how almost impossible it is, for a rich man to be a convert to the gospel. 23, 24.

The disciples seemed touched with the perilous state of the salvation of mankind; as all people had more or less, of this world's goods. But Jesus looking on them with an eye of tenderness, said, I speak of those only, who, like this young man, place their happiness in their wealth. They, who trust in God, however rich, may, through his divine assistance, overcome the world. 25, 26.

Here Peter, in the name of himself and his brethren, declared they had left all for the sake of their master; and asked what their 27.

To obviate this objection, it must be remembered, what is the scope, and aim of the relation before us. This forward young man is not introduced here with a view to be instructed in the truths of religion; but merely as an example, to shew, how an attachment to the world sets our principles, and practice at variance. Nor did it signify giving *him* any of the purer doctrines of the gospel, till he had shewn, that he had received the first great principle of it; that of faith in Jesus as his *master*, whom he plainly seemed to acknowledge as the *Messiah*. Some commentators indeed suppose the young man did *not* acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah; and that Jesus for this reason meant to rebuke him, for calling him *good master*; but the progress of the narrative, I think, seems to require the interpretation I have given; for it was surely unreasonable to expect the young man should sell all he had, and give it to the poor, and then follow a person, of whose pretensions he knew nothing.

24. Some for καμηλον read καμιλον, which makes the sense run, It is easier for a *camel-ropes*, &c.—But I rather suppose the common reading right: for a similar expression occurs in the Talmud: “No elephant enters by the eye of a needle.”

28, 29. reward should be? Jesus told them, their reward should be proportionally great; and in general assured them, that whoever sat loose to the things of the world for the sake of religion, should be recompensed abundantly in this life, and everlastingly rewarded in a life to come.—But many, he added, who seem to be among the most distinguished, are in fact the least. The Jews particularly, tho the first-called, and most favoured people, would, like this young man, reject the offers, which God designed them. God's equity therefore, said he, in holding out these blessings to the gentiles, may be thus illustrated.

30.

C H A P.
XX.

1, 2, 3, 4,
5, 6, 7, 8,
9, 10, 11,
12, 13, 14,
15, 16.

A husbandman went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard; with whom he agreed at the price of the country. Afterwards, at different times, and even at a late hour, he went out; and finding others standing idle, because they had no offer of employment, he sent them also into his vineyard. In the evening, they were all called together; and all received the same wages. But they who had been sent into the vineyard in the morning, represented it as a hard case, that they had received no more, than those, who had wrought only a short evening-hour. On this the master of the vineyard gave them a severe rebuke; “ My friends, said he, I have done you no wrong. Have you not received the price, for which we agreed? Take it therefore, and be content. Have not I power to chuse the objects of my own bounty? Are my kind

28. The expression, *ye shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, seems to be only an eastern mode of expressing the high degree of dignity, which Christ promised to his apostles. As this was spoken to the twelve; we cannot suppose it could be meant in its literal sense of Judas: and St. Paul particularly speaks of himself, as expecting future judgment: 1 Cor. iv. 4. and again Rom. xiv. 10.

1. This parable is supposed to be taken from the Jerusalem Talmud, only differently applied. It is very evident, that it was our Saviour's method, on all occasions, to teach by such proverbs, parables, and images, as were the most familiar.

intentions

intentions to be restrained by your narrow opinions †?—Thus, added Jesus, God Almighty grants the gentiles the same favours, which he had granted the Jews, if they obey his will as soon as they are called. But among such numbers as have received this gracious call, how few are there, who have the wisdom to accept it!

As Jesus was now approaching Jerusalem, he thought it proper, 17, 18, 19.
a third time, to put his disciples in mind of his sufferings, and death; and opened this great event still more explicitly to them by adding some new circumstances, particularly that he should be delivered into the hands of the gentiles; but concluded all with an assurance, that he should rise again on the third day. Their 20, 21.
conceptions however of what he meant, were still so very low, that the mother of two of them, James, and John, hearing of the resurrection, and conceiving it to be some great event of worldly felicity, came to him, with her sons, to desire of him a distinguished place for them, in that kingdom, whatever it should be, which he was about to establish. Jesus told her, she 22, 23.
knew not what she asked—that she did not understand the nature of his kingdom—that it did not lead to worldly pomp and glory; but to sufferings, and death—and tho her sons might, and certainly should follow his painful steps; yet seats of distinguished eminence in his kingdom were not to be given through favour, or

† As our Saviour's parables have frequently a double view, this parable seems not only to illustrate the case of the Jews, and Gentiles; but the case of all individuals of every nation, whom God accepts, according to the improvement of the opportunities they have had.

19. This was very remarkable. It all along appeared, that the intention of the chief-priests led to private assassination, or stoning Jesus in a tumultuary manner. But he now informed his disciples, of what never entered into any body's head,—that he should be delivered to the Romans.—Thus this great event was brought about, by the enemies of the gospel, in such a way as to confirm the truth of it in the strongest manner. *All this was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled.*

partiality; but to those only, whom God should see properly prepared for them;

24. At these ambitious designs of the two brothers, the rest of the disciples, not wholly devoid of the same ideas themselves, took offence.

25, 26, 27. Jesus observing the heart-burnings, which were thus rising among them, called them together, and told them, these were notions, which belonged only to the ambitious rulers of this world, not to the disciples of the gospel. My disciples, said he, must have humble hearts, in which no ambitious thoughts can harbour. They must endeavour to be the greatest, by considering themselves as the least. They must condescend to be the lowest on earth, before they can expect to be among the highest in heaven. They must imitate their master, who came into the world, not to be received with pomp; but to spend his life in sufferings, and finally to lay it down as a ransom for mankind.

29. Jesus, still in his road to Jerusalem, by this time had arrived at Jericho, from which town a great multitude followed him. In the road sat two blind men, who hearing, that he was in the croud, called out, and addressing him, by the name of the son of David, intreated him to have mercy on them; which cry they continued, tho the people rebuked their importunity. Jesus, calling them to him, asked what mercy they wished to receive? They answered, the recovery of their sight. On this he touched their

24. There cannot be a greater instance of self-deceit, than this passage affords. In the 27th verse of the last chapter, Peter mentioned his having given up every thing for the sake of the gospel; and no doubt believed he spoke with great sincerity: for I suppose his question, *what shall we have therefore*, (introduced, as it is, after the story of the rich man) had reference to some future retribution. It appears however, both from his being angry at James, and John; and likewise from the whole turn of our Saviour's answer, that there was still a spirit of ambition about him; and that he had still a confused idea of receiving some great temporal advantage from his attachment to his master. If such self-delusion could enter the simplicity of an apostle's heart, with how much care ought we to guard against it!

eyes,

eyes, and they immediately saw clearly, and joined the croud that attended him.

C H A P.
XXI.

1, 2, 3, 4,
5, 6, 7, 8,
9.

Soon after, Jesus arrived at Bethphage, a town situated under the mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. From hence he sent two of his disciples to a neighbouring village, describing in what circumstances they should find an ass with her colt; and instructing them what to say to the owner, if he should offer to prevent their bringing them. The disciples following their instructions, laid their cloaths on the colt, and set Jesus upon it: while the people, spreading their garments, and strewing leaves, and

5. Zech. ix. 9.—Most of the prophecies of our blessed Saviour were fulfilled by the intervention of other people, without his own concurrence. But this was fulfilled, says the objector, by himself; and certainly there is no great difficulty in fulfilling a prophecy in that way.—But it may be asked, how could such a prophecy be fulfilled in any other way? The objector must consider, that the chief completion of the prophecy lay in the great concurrence of other people, which was necessary to make up the triumph; so that the prophecy could not have been fulfilled by himself alone. The great credit therefore of Jesus assembled the multitude in a manner, which no other person could have done.—This whole transaction receives additional force, and propriety, when we consider, that it was the realizing of a typical ceremony, (another mode of prophecy) which was always performed at the feast of tabernacles. The people at that time carried branches of palm, and other trees (see Levit. xxiii. 40.) with which they used to walk in procession, crying *Hosanna*; that is, *save I beseech thee*. These words were always applied by the Jewish rabbies to the Messiah. The people therefore being convinced, that Jesus was the Messiah, applied this ceremony directly to him: and indeed it is evident throughout, that the people were all along disposed to receive him as the Messiah: which they could only be from the miracles, which they saw him work, and the prophetic characters, which they saw him fulfil.—Horses were in little use among the Jews, except in war. All the old patriarchs and prophets rode on asses. Deut. xvii. 16; and Judg. v. 10, &c.

8. It was usual to spread garments under great personages, and especially at the inauguration of kings. “*Then they hastened, and took every man his garment, and put it under him, (that is, under Jehu) at the top of the stairs; and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.*” 2 Kings ix. 13.

Κλάδος, which is rendered a branch, signifies properly a *slight twig*, or the first year’s shoot, which may easily be broken. St. Mark (xi. 8) uses the word *τροισάδα*, which has nearly the same meaning.—*Branches from the trees* would entangle passengers.

sprigs

spring in the way, went before, and followed with a song of triumph, Hosannah to the son of David, blessed is he, that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosannah in the highest. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh unto thee meek, and lowly, sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*

10. In this manner Jesus entering Jerusalem, the whole city was in commotion, every one inquiring, who he was? To which inquiry voices from every part of the croud were heard, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee †.

12. At the temple Jesus alighted, and passing through the outward court, he was disgusted at seeing it occupied by buyers, and sellers; all

† This triumphant entry of our Saviour into Jerusalem was so totally different from every action of his humble life, that there must have been some very particular reason for it. It may be conjectured, that as Jesus was now about to finish the great scheme of the redemption of mankind by his death, and resurrection, he might chuse to make those wonderful events as public as possible; that all mankind might be witnesses of them. For the same reason it may be supposed, our blessed Saviour chose to suffer at the time of the passover, not only to fulfil more appositely the type of the paschal lamb; but also because Jerusalem was then crowded with strangers, to whom this event still farther notified him.

12. These people sold oxen, sheep, doves, and other things necessary for the sacrifices of the temple; on the pretence of furnishing a ready convenience to the people.—The money-changer was necessary to convert into current coin, the several kinds of foreign money, which were brought by proselytes from various parts of the empire. But as our Saviour thought that all this traffic was improperly carried on within the precincts of the temple, and also dishonestly conducted, he judged it right to put a stop to it.

Some interpreters suppose that no *miracle* was here intended; but that the buyers and sellers durst not resist Jesus, then at the head of so powerful a body of people—I am not fond of representing our blessed Saviour in any light, in which violence is concerned. I think it presents a grander idea to suppose, that Jesus awed them into submission, by the dignity of his person and behaviour. It is not uncommon to see a multitude struck with awe, on the appearance of a person, whom they respect. We have a celebrated instance of it in our own history in the case of Richard II; who, tho a mere youth, by a single effort of his own, awed into submission an armed and enraged multitude. Much more may we suppose the divine appearance of Jesus might awe a venal set of people, convicted by their own consciences; and who we have no reason to believe were very numerous. We know that the divine appearance and dignity of Jesus had

all of whom he drove out ; saying, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer ; but you have made it a den of thieves. 13.

The fame of his entrance into Jerusalem having soon spread through the city, numbers of sick people were brought to him in the temple, as had been usual in all other places ; and with the same kindness, and compassion he healed them. 14.

The Scribes, and chief priests, who had treated Jesus with so much severity at a distance, could not be supposed to be indifferent to these uncommon proceedings in the very place of their jurisdiction. They assembled therefore about him ; and not daring to apply any direct force, asked him, Whether he countenanced all that noise, and clamour, which the people, and children made around him ? Jesus reminding them of a passage in the Psalms ; *Out of the mouth of babes, and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise*, left them to apply it ; and retired to Bethany, a village about a mile from Jerusalem. 15, 16, 17.

In the morning he returned to the city ; and in his way took an opportunity, from a barren fig-tree, which stood near the road, to give his disciples, at this approaching time of trial, a visible instance of the nature of faith. On his finding the fig-tree, flourishing in appearance, but without fruit, he forbid it ever again to bear any ; and the disciples expressing their surprize on seeing it wither, Jesus exhorted them to consider what they had seen as an emblem of barren faith : implying, that when faith was accompanied with works, as the tree should be with fruit, there was nothing so difficult, which it 18, 19.

20, 21, 22.

had that effect, soon after, even upon a band of armed soldiers. (John xviii. 6) We know also that Jesus himself, on another occasion, disclaimed all human assistance : *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews ; but now is my kingdom not from hence.* John xviii. 36.

13. See Isa. lvi. 7. Jer. vii. 11.

16. Ps. viii. 2.

it might not effect†; as there was nothing more efficacious with God, than prayer founded on faith.

23. As soon as Jesus entered Jerusalem, he went into the temple, and began to teach the people. But the Scribes, and Pharisees interrupted him; and gathering round, desired, he would inform them, By what authority he acted in so commanding a manner?

24. Jesus, knowing it was in vain to reason with them, answered them
25. by a question. Tell me first, said he, whether you consider the mission of John the Baptist, as divine, or human? This question of his, in fact included an answer to theirs; for whatever was the authority of John, such also was the authority of Jesus. It perplexed the Pharisees therefore not a little. If we shall acknowledge, said they, the mission of John to be divine, it immediately recurs, why
26. then do you not believe in Christ, whose authority he proved? On the other hand, if we declare, we believe it human, we are in danger from the multitude; for the people believe John to have been a true
27. prophet. They answered therefore, they could not tell. It is to no purpose then, said Jesus, for me to give you any further answer to the question you demand.

28. Jesus then spoke the following parable: A certain man, said he,
29. had two sons; whom he ordered to work in his vineyard. One of them at first refused; but afterwards coming to himself, he repented,
30. and went. The other with great reverence, received his father's orders; but in the end never went into the vineyard at all. Which
31. now, continued Jesus, was the more obedient son?

The former undoubtedly, they said.

Jesus

† This idea indeed is not expressed in our Saviour's words; but it is so strongly implied in the circumstances of the action, as to render words needless.—*Removing a mountain* is only an eastern figure for performing a difficult matter.—It is to be remembered also that such a prayer as is here supposed, will never be directed to improper objects.

31. From the mention made of *publicans* and *barlots*, one should rather be led to suppose, that Jesus meant to shew the chief priests and elders, that such as they esteemed the most profligate

Jefus then, in very plain language, gave them to underftand, this was juft the cafe between the Gentile world, and them—and that, in fact, their heathen neighbours were better difpofed, than they were, to embrace the gofpel. You, faid he, will not even acknowledge the divine miffion of John; which the moft abandoned of the people acknowledged, and repented on his call. 32.

Jefus then by an apt fimilitude, reprefented to them their behaviour to God under the difpenfation both of the law, and the gofpel. 33.

A houfe-holder, faid he, planted a vineyard; and having fenced it, and furnifhed it with every thing proper, put it into the hands of labourers, and took a journey. At the feafon he fent different fervants, at different times, to collect the fruits. But the labourers treated them all with indignity, and cruelty, and even put fome of them to death. At laft, he fent his fon; not doubting but they would treat him with proper refpect. But it fell out otherwife. The labourers thinking, that if they fhould deftroy the heir, the inheritance fhould be theirs, killed even the fon himfelf.—What therefore, added Jefus, fhall the mafter of the vineyard do to thofe wicked labourers? 34, 35 36. 37. 38. 39. 40.

No doubt, faid the Pharifees, he will punifh them with juft feverity; and fend other labourers into his vineyard. 41.

fligate, were nearer the kingdom of heaven, than they were: but from the drift of the parable; and the allufion to two fons, which is not fingular (fee Luke xv. 11.) it rather appears as if Jefus meant an oppofition between the Jews, and Gentiles. See alfo verfe 43 of this chapter.

33. Our Saviour obliquely gives the form of a prophecy to this parable, which is copied, with a very few alterations, from the 5th chapter of Ifaiah.—Digging wine-prefles, Sir J. Charifin fays, is ftill praftifed in Perfia.

37. *It may be they will reverence my fon.* This is merely an ornamental circumftance; for we are affured, God forefaw the death of Chrift.

41. Bowyer conjettures, that λεγουσιν αυτω fhould be omitted. The fenfe will then be, *What will he do to thefe husbandmen? He will deftroy, &c.* This makes the paffage agree with Luke xx. 16, where the chief priefts answer, *God forbid!*

42. Did you never read, continued Jesus, *that the stone which the builders rejected, is become the chief stone in the corner*; uniting the different
 43. parts of the building together? He then told them, that if they continued thus hardened; all offers of grace should be taken from them, and given to those, who would accept them with gratitude; and that
 44. in the end, if they continued impenitent, the weight of that corner-stone, which they had so long despised, should fall upon them, and finally crush them.

45. This conversation so plainly directed against the chief priests, and Pharisees, incensed them to such a degree; that they wished to apprehend Jesus; but durst not do it at this public season, because of
 46. the people, who considered him with the highest veneration as a prophet.

C H A P.
XXII.

1.

On another occasion, about this time, Jesus represented to the Pharisees, the danger of rejecting the gospel under the following similitude.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6. A prince, said he, on the marriage of his son, made a great feast; and when it was ready, sent his servants to call the guests, whom he had invited. But they instead of accepting the invitation, made light excuses; and some of them even ill-treated his servants. The prince
 7, 8, 9, 10. incensed at this behaviour, issued, at the same time, an order to punish those wicked people; and an invitation to other guests. The servants, accordingly gathered all they found, from the roads, and other places of public resort; till the room was intirely filled. The
 11, 12, 13. king then coming to see his guests, observed a person, who had not
 had

42. Psā. cxviii. 22.

7. *He sent out his troops, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city.* This seems to allude to the Roman army destroying Jerusalem. If so, we have at once a parable and a prophecy.

12. This parable was intended chiefly to shew the Jews, that the offers of grace, which they rejected, should be made to the Gentiles. But the latter part of it might be meant to check

had the precaution to put on a wedding-garment. He accosted him in such language, as was due; and finding him without excuse, he punished him as he deserved. From hence Jesus gave his hearers to understand, that every one, was not among the chosen, *who in appearance accepted the call.*

14.

The Pharisees highly irritated at these discourses; and finding the difficulty of effecting any thing by violence against Jesus, resolved, if possible, to insnare him in his discourse. 15, 16, 17.

It was a great question among the Jews, at that time, whether, as God's peculiar people, they ought to acknowledge any temporal prince? It was a dangerous question also; as a decision, on one side, might irritate the Romans; and on the other, the Jews. With this insnaring inquiry therefore, the Pharisees dispatched some artful men to Jesus; who pretending great devotion to him on the account of his wisdom, and sanctity, asked him, as if to settle their own consciences, Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?

Jesus knowing their insidious design, bad them shew him the tribute money. On their producing a Roman penny, he asked whose image, and inscription it bore? They answered, Cæsar's. Give then to Cæsar, replied Jesus, the things, which are Cæsar's; and to God, the things which are God's.

18, 19.

20.

21.

check the presumption of all pretenders to God's favour without endeavouring to deserve it.— It was customary for the bridegroom to prepare garments for his guests. This man is supposed in the parable to have intruded without that requisite.

16. The *Herodians* are mentioned in the text, as accompanying the Pharisees. As they were violent party-men, under Herod, in upholding the Roman power, they were well-chosen witnesses to be present at the conference.

19. The penny, or *denarius*, is a small silver coin, somewhat heavier than a sixpence, tho not so broad. Numbers of them are found, at this day, in various parts of England and other places, where the Romans have been stationed. The denarius was worth about seven-pence half-penny of our money.

21. The Jews accepted this money in payment; and therefore acknowledged Cæsar's right to receive it.

22. An answer so full of caution, propriety, and wisdom, astonished, and silenced them.

23. These people had not long left him, when a body of Sadducees came forward. The Sadducees did not believe in a future state; and brought a question, which appeared to them a direct proof of their

24. point. Master, said they, Moses enjoins, that if a man die without issue, his brother shall marry his widow, to continue the family.

25, 26, 27. Now we can produce an instance of seven brethren, who had the same wife, one after another. If there be a future state therefore, we

28. should be glad to know, which of those seven brethren should claim

29, 30. the woman? Jesus told them, their ignorance proceeded intirely from their understanding neither the scriptures, nor the power of God. The state of the next world, he informed them, was not to be upheld

31. by marriage, which ceased after this life. He then added, in opposition to their general principle, that, if they believed in Moses, they

32. must also believe in a future state. What does God mean, said he, when he declares himself to be the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? You cannot suppose, that he would stile himself the God of dead people; but of those patriarchs who were still in a state of existence.

33. These things having been said before the multitude, greatly raised their admiration of Jesus. But the Pharisees were differently affected.

34, 35, 36, When they saw the Sadducees thus silenced, they gathered again about him; and one of them, with an insidious intention, asked him, which

32. Our Saviour here reasons with the Sadducees from Moses (Exod. iii. 6) as they acknowledged only the Pentateuch.

35. There seems to be some difficulty in this passage. It does not well appear how the question was insidious; unless on some such supposition, as I have made in the text.—(See a note on the parallel passage in St. Mark; xii. 28.) This supposition seems the better grounded, as in the very next chapter our Saviour makes the same distinction. *Ye pay tribute of mint, and anise, and cummin; and omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. These ought ye to have done; and not to leave the other undone.* Mat. xxiii. 23.

37. The love of God is one point only of the law—yet if you keep it, you will naturally be led to fulfil every other. So of the second commandment (ver. 39) tho the love of our neighbour

which was the great point in the law? having an eye probably to some popular opinions about the ceremonial law. But Jesus referring him to the moral part of it, laid the stress on love to God, and man; to establish which great points, he said, the ceremonies of the law, and the writings of the prophets intirely tended. 40.

Jesus then turning to the Pharisees, asked them, what their opinion was of the Messiah, as predicted by the prophets; and particularly, whose son he was? They answered, without all doubt the son of David. 41, 42.

How is it then, said Jesus, that David speaking of the Messiah, in the spirit of prophecy, calls him Lord; saying, *The Lord, said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?* How can he at the same time, be David's superior, and inferior? 43. 44. 45.

The Pharisees unable to answer this question, were confounded; and from this time made no further attempt to insnare him in his discourse. 46.

Jesus having thus silenced the Scribes, and Pharisees, thought it right to give the people a just notion of them, and their doctrine. While they continued therefore on the spot, he told his disciples, and the multitude around him, that as far as the Scribes and Pharisees justly expounded the law, their instructions were good: But take care, said he, how you follow their example. Their actions, and their precepts totally differ. However strict they may be to others; with regard to themselves, they are sufficiently remiss. The praise of men is all they seek. For this they add breadth to 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. C H A P. XXIII. 1. 2, 3. 4. 5.

bour also is only one point, yet it will naturally engage us to fulfil every other social duty; as explained in Romans xiii. 9, 10.—The passages of the law, to which our Saviour alludes, are Deut. vi. 5; and Levit. xix. 18.

44. Psa. cx. 1.

5. The phylactery was a scrap of parchment, inscribed with some passage from the law of Moses, which the Pharisee (interpreting literally Deut. vi. 8; and other similar passages) wore on the front of his cap. The fringe was ordered by Moses, as we read in Numbers xv. 38. He therefore who wore his phylactery, and his fringe, of the largest size, was thought to be the greatest devotee.

their

6. their phylacteries, and depth to their fringes. For this they seek the highest seats at entertainments, and in the synagogues. For
7. this they give each other sounding titles, and respectable salutations.
- 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. But do not you affect such distinctions. Be you humble and lowly-minded; and refer all praise to God. To him every degree of *self-exaltation* is displeasing.
13. Then turning again to the Scribes, and Pharisees, Highly guilty, said he, are you in the eye of God, for opposing his last great dispensation in the gospel. It's gracious offers you will neither yourselves
14. accept, nor suffer others. You hypocritical guides, who substitute
15. long prayers in the room of works of charity; and make profelytes only with a view to propagate impiety.
- 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. What absurd distinctions make you in oaths? How can you conceive, that an oath by the gold of the temple, or by the gift on the altar, is binding; while oaths by the temple, or altar themselves, (which, in fact, consecrate both the gold, and the gift) are invalid? Be assured, that he, who sweareth by the creature (be it under any denomination) sweareth also by the Creator.
- 23, 24, 25, 26. Look into your guilty lives, you hypocrites. See with what exactness you perform each less important ceremony; yet how lax you are, at the same time, in every moral duty. Your outward deportment is all religious: the sentiments of your hearts are polluted with every impurity. Like adorned sepulchres, your outside is

15. Horace alludes to this spirit of making profelytes among the Jews.

Ac veluti te
Judæi, cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.

Hor. Sat. i. 4.

16. The Jews had strange, and absurd distinctions about oaths, as appears from various parts of the Talmudic writings.

23. Tythe was paid for the service of the temple. The scrupulous exactness therefore in paying it, was considered by the Pharisees as the perfection of religion.

24. *Strain out a gnat*, rather than *strain at a gnat*.

27. Sepulchres in the east, Dr. Shaw tells us, are still adorned with great care.

fair,

fair, your inside mere corruption. You build the tombs of the prophets, and acknowledge yourselves to be the children of those, who put them to death; and yet exceed even your fathers in wickedness. Your hypocrisy indeed may deceive men, but will not enable you to escape the justice of God. Apostles, and righteous teachers shall be sent among you; but you shall treat them, as your fathers did the prophets of old—that all the holy blood that hath been shed in the world may be required of this sinful nation†.—O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou city polluted with wickedness, how often hath thy gracious father called thee to repentance! how often hath he made thee the tenderest, and kindest offers of mercy! but all in vain. Thy desolation is at hand. That awful hour approaches, when thy calamities shall at length draw from thee an acknowledgment of the truth.

29, 30, 31.

32, 33.

34, 35, 36.

37.

38.

39.

Jesus having said these things, left the multitude, and retired. As he went out of the temple, his disciples observed to him the

C H A P.
XXIV.
1, 2.

29. Josephus says, that Herod was at great expence in beautifying the sepulchre of David; to which St. Peter alludes, Acts ii. 29.

32. Bowyer conjectures, that *fill ye up*, should rather be in the future; *ye will fill up*.

35. It is a great question who *Zacharias* the son of *Barachias* was. What makes it a difficulty, is an account we have in Josephus of the death of a *Zacharias* in a future period, attended with circumstances very similar to these of the evangelist. Of this the deist takes advantage. The evangelist, says he, could not write at the time he pretends, because he alludes to a fact, which happened thirty years after.—Dr. Lardner, in the first volume of his *Credibility*, seems to have settled very satisfactorily, that our Saviour alludes to that *Zacharias*, of whom we have an account 2 Chron. xxiv. 20.

† This severe invective of our blessed Saviour against the Scribes, and Pharisees, must not be a pattern to us—He knew the hearts of men.—Besides we must distinguish between what he said, as a prophet of the Lord, and what he said as instruction to us. The prophet was appointed to denounce God's vengeance against the wicked. Of this we have many instances in the old testament; and a few in the new.

2. There is no occasion to consider this as spoken *literally*: and yet we are assured by historians, that it was *almost literally* fulfilled. Josephus tells us, that Titus ordered his soldiers to dig up, and overthrow (*κατασκαπτειν*) the whole temple; except three towers, which he left as a monument of its greatness.

grandeur

3. grandeur of it's various buildings. Grand as they were, he said, the time approached, when one stone should not be left upon another. He then ascended the mount of Olives, and sitting down in full view of the temple, and all it's splendid buildings, his disciples continued the discourse, and desired to know, what signs should point out the ruin of the Jewish nation, and the end of all things?

4, 5. In the first place, said Jesus, guard against deception: for many false Messiahs shall arise, and mislead mankind by their delusions.

6, 7, 8. Wars and famines, pestilences, and earthquakes shall precede that great desolation. You also shall be the scorn of bad men, who

9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. shall treat you with every indignity, and put you to death. You shall see also a great desertion of the truth. Yet amidst all these false prophets, and false professors, the gospel shall have made it's way

3. Jerusalem was built on a hill; opposite to which was another hill, called the mount of Olives. The valley of Cedron ran betwixt them. The foot of the mount of Olives therefore approached very near Jerusalem, tho some of its more retired parts were at a considerable distance.

3. The disciples probably had but a confused idea of the question. They might suppose, that the *destruction of Jerusalem*, and the *end of all things*, were concomitant events; alluding to the great Jewish division of time, into the age of the law, and the age of the Messiah. Their divine master however seems to take their question literally, as if it included two inquiries. I have endeavoured in the notes to mark the limits of each.

7. All those signs, in an eminent degree, preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. Wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are all mentioned. Josephus is full of prodigies, which preceded this dreadful event; and even the judicious Tacitus, (Hist. v. 13) thus speaks of them. "Many prodigies also appeared, which a superstitious people, averse to the rites of religion, refused to expiate. Hosts of men, with glittering arms, were seen engaging in the heavens; while the whole temple seemed as if on fire. It's gates were burst open; and a voice more than human resounded over the city, *The Gods have left you*. Tumultuous noises of multitudes rushing out, were at the same instant heard."—As to impostors, and false prophets, which our Saviour emphatically takes notice of, it was indeed chiefly through their delusions, and promises of deliverance, that the Jews were incited to those frequent rebellions, which at length so highly incensed the Romans against them. See Acts xxi. 38. and Joseph de Bell. Jud. ii. 13, 4.

even among the Gentiles, before that great event shall be accomplished†. Then shall you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel—the armies, and images of heathen nations, advancing round the city. On these prophetic warnings let all who believe, fly from this devoted place, and pray to God to alleviate calamities, which shall be greater, than the world ever before saw; but which God will graciously terminate, in his appointed time, for the sake of his pious servants.—But above all things take care not to be led away by the delusions of false Christs, and false prophets, who shall endeavour to deceive even those, who are established in the faith. I have already warned you against them; wherever they are pointed out to you in the desert, or in the city, believe them not.

15. 16. 17.
18.19. 20. 21.
22.

23. 24.

25. 26. 27.
28.

The

† See Rom. x. 18. Coloss. i. 6, 23.

15. See Dan. ix. 27. This abomination, probably, refers to the setting up of heathen idols in the temple.

16. Josephus, and Eusebius both inform us, that numbers of Christians fled from the calamities of the siege; and the latter expressly mentions Pella, a town on the banks of Jordan, where they found an asylum.

20. *Pray that your flight be not in the winter.* The Talmudists express themselves to the same effect. *The Lord shewed mercy on Israel. They should have been carried away to Babylon in the tenth month, when all would have perished by the winter: but God prolonged the time; and they were led away in the summer.*

23. 24. Some interpreters do not suppose this to be a repetition; but that as the former false prophets appeared as signs *before* the siege; these appeared *during* the continuance of it. It is true such false pretenders did arise *during* the siege; but I think our Saviour still speaks of the former. All Christians were expressly warned to fly *from* the siege; and as we are assured, they did, they were in no danger of being deceived by any false prophets, *after* the siege had commenced.

28. If I be not satisfied with the interpretation of this verse, which I have here offered; I must own, I am as little so, with the usual interpretations. I cannot think that the *eagles* here are meant to denote either the swiftness of the Messiah's coming; or the Roman standards, on which eagles were portrayed. Perhaps the best sense of all is, that it is a proverbial expression, signifying, that wherever the enemies of religion are; there, at some time or other, the vengeance of heaven will *overtake* them; of which Jerusalem should be a signal example.—But tho this interpretation may agree perhaps better with the *words*; yet the interpretation I have given seems to agree better with the *context*; in which our Saviour is opposing the true

The coming of the real Messiah, like lightening, pervades every part of the world: while false Messiahs, like eagles flocking to their prey, have always some partial end, or quarry in view.

29. 30. 31. Then will approach the awful time, when nature dissolving before the son of God, and all the tribes of the earth mourning in conscious guilt, he will send forth his heavenly ministers, and make the grand separation of good and bad.

32. 33. Thus as the budding of the tree shews you the approach of summer; so let the signs I have given you, point out that great event,
34. 35. about which you inquire. Nor is it far distant. This generation, be assured, shall see it fulfilled.

36. As to that other great event, the end of all things, God hath reserved that as a secret with himself. Be the time of it however when

Christ to the false pretenders, that should arise.—This interpretation, I think, seems to have struck Mr. Addison, as the just one: It is probable he alludes to this passage, and to this explanation of it, in the following words; “How else, during the apostles lives, could Christianity have spread itself with such an amazing progress, through the several nations of the Roman empire? How could it fly like lightening, and carry conviction with it from one end of the earth to the other?” Addison’s evidences, &c.

31. From the sudden destruction of Jerusalem here first our Saviour (whose constant practice it was to draw every subject to some useful point) seems to make a transition to the end of the world; and to temporal death, which may be considered as the end of the world to every individual. The idea, which seems particularly to strike him, and give occasion to the transition, is the separation, which should be made between those, who should be destroyed in the siege of Jerusalem; and those who should escape from it.—If the reader wishes to see an ample, and very satisfactory account, of the prophetic mode of blending different subjects; and of passing with rapidity from one to another, he may find it in the bishop of London’s note on the 13 verse of the lii. chapter of Isaiah.—Some interpreters conceive, that in these passages our Saviour considers the destruction of Jerusalem as a type of the conclusion of all things; and in this view mixes the colours of both catastrophies together. It is not indeed very easy to make the separation. Those grand images employed in the 29th verse, *the sun shall be darkened—the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven*—are certainly much used by the prophets to denote the fall of nations. See Isa. xiii. 10—xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7.—Joel ii. 30.

36. Some very judicious critics make the words *ημεραι ενωμην* refer, as I have here referred them, not to the preceding verses; but to the conclusion of the 31st verse.—Indeed, I think, it

when it may, it will come suddenly on the world. The days of 37. 38. 39.
 Noah are an emblem of that great, and awful visitation. Careless,
 and inattentive, the busy world was then employed in all the
 ordinary offices of life, when the flood came suddenly upon them,
 and swept them away. Such also shall be that other great event— 40. 41.
 sudden, and, in appearance, undistinguishing, carrying off, and
 leaving behind, people in outward circumstances exactly the same.

Be therefore continually on your guard. If the hour of death 42. 43.
 had been pointed out to man, he would have been satisfied merely
 with a partial vigilance. But it is God's will, that the hour should 44.
 be concealed, that man may be always ready.

Let each of you therefore endeavour to be that faithful steward, 45.
 with whom his lord shall intrust his family-affairs. Blessed, and 46. 47.
 kindly rewarded shall that servant be, whom his lord, when he comes
 suddenly, shall find in his duty. On the other hand, if he shall 48.
 wickedly encourage himself in the hopes of his lord's delay; and 49.
 instead of employing his time properly, shall spend it in acts of
 intemperance, and oppression; his Lord shall come suddenly 50.
 upon him; and appoint him that punishment, which he so well 51.
 deserved.

Ten virgins, said Jesus continuing the subject, took their lamps
 to meet the bridegroom in a marriage ceremony. Such of them
 as were prudent, took with them a supply of oil, which the others

C H A P.
 XXV.
 1. 2.
 3. 4.

it rather implies a contradiction, if it be otherwise; for our Saviour says plainly, that the
 destruction of Jerusalem should happen during *this generation*. How then could he say the time
 was a *secret*?—Some have held, that *oidei* signifies here (as it does 1 Cor. ii. 2) to *make known*,
 or *declare*: but I think we need no such declaration to shew the absurdity of supposing that men
 could *make known*, or *declare* either the last judgment, or the destruction of Jerusalem.

51. *Cutting asunder* was a punishment literally used by some tyrants. Multos honesti ordinis
 medios ferra dissecuit. Sueton. in vitâ Calig.

5. had neglected. In the mean time, till the proceſſion approached,
 6. they repoſed. But in the middle of the night, ſudden notice was
 7. given of the bridegroom's coming. On this all the virgins aroſe
 8. 9. 10. ſpeedily to trim their lamps. The wife were inſtantly ready; but the
 11. 12. imprudent virgins were thrown into great confuſion. Then firſt
 they perceived their neglect. Their lamps were expiring; and they
 had no oil to reſreſh them. While they endeavoured to procure a
 ſupply, the bridegroom entered; the door was ſhut; and all admit-
 13. tance denied.—Be you therefore prepared, added Jeſus, and always
 ready; for you know not at what hour you may be called.
 14. And that you may always be prepared, take care to uſe thoſe bleſ-
 ſings, whatever they are, which God hath given you, to the beſt
 advantage. God's diſpenſations to man, with regard to his various
 gifts may be thus illuſtrated.
- A maſter of a family, going from home, left in the hands of his
 ſervants ſeveral ſums of money; which he ordered them to improve
 15. againſt his return. To one he gave five talents; to another two; and
 16. 17. to a third, one; proportioning the ſeveral ſums to the abilities of
 18. each. He who had received five talents; and he who had received
 two, trading with them, doubled each his original ſum; while he,
 who had received only one talent, inſtead of making any uſe of it,
 19. hid it in the ground.—After ſome time, the maſter returning
 20. 21. 22. home, called his ſervants to account. They, to whom he had
 23. truſted the larger portions, paid into his hand, the gains they had
 acquired,

6. The Jewiſh marriages were celebrated in the night, when the bride was led home by torch-light. It was cuſtomary indeed in many other countries. Statius introduces the nine Muſes with their lamps, leading a bride home :

Demigrant Helicone Deæ, quatiuntque novenâ
 Lampade ſolemnem thalamis coeuntibus ignem.

Syl. lib. 2.

23. The doctrine inculcated in this parable is, that whether we are in high circumſtances, or low, if we improve our talents equally, our reward alſo ſhall be equal; which is a moſt comfortable

acquired, together with the original sums; and each received commendation, and a proportioned reward. Afterwards, he who had hid his talent in the ground, coming with much contradictory apology, which only increased his offence, returned the talent he had received, intirely unimproved. His lord, giving him a severe rebuke; in which he pointed out to him, from his own excuse, his slothful, and negligent behaviour, punished him with proper severity; and gave his unemployed talent to him, who had already ten; saying, That more should still be given to those, who improved what they had; while they who neglected even a little, should not only lose that little, but suffer for the neglect.

Jesus concluded his divine discourse, with a representation of the last judgment. When the son of man, said he, shall appear in his glory; sitting on his throne with all the holy angels around him, then shall be assembled before him all the nations of the earth; whom he shall separate, and divide, as a shepherd divides his flock.—To them on his

fortable doctrine to those in low stations. The *station* is nothing; the *improvement* is all.—This doctrine is mentioned by Mr. Necker, the French financier, as one of the *distinctive characters* of the morality of the gospel, in his excellent book on the Importance of religious sentiments.

29. *From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.* Thus Juvenal, in a similar manner expresses himself.

Nil habuit Codrus——et tamen illud
Perdidit infelix nil———

31. In the former parable our Saviour had shewn, that we ought to improve our talents; in this, he proceeds a step further, and shews in *what manner* we ought to improve them—in acts of mercy, and kindness to each other.

31. Some fix the transition to a future judgment at this verse. The 40th, and 41st verses of chap. xxiv. have indeed no relation to a last judgment; but they are very descriptive of the indiscriminate manner, in which death carries off mankind: and the 42d, and following verses apply more to this idea, than to the destruction of Jerusalem. So does all the beginning of the xxvth chapter.

34. The phrase in the original, *which hath been prepared for you from the foundation of the world*; has often been brought to countenance God's absolute decrees. But surely it is pressed harshly

35. 36. 37.
38. 39. 40.

his right hand, he shall thus speak: Come, ye blessed, inherit that state of happiness, which hath been prepared for you—that recompence, which ye shall now reap for all those many acts of kindness, and mercy, which I have received at your hands. They with great modesty will profess, they never had any opportunity of doing him service. To me, in my own person, he will say, you have not: but I take to myself those kind offices, which on earth you so tenderly performed to others.—Then turning to those on his

41. 42. 43.
44. 45.

left hand he will say, Depart from me to that state of misery, which your wicked, and impenitent hearts deserve. He will then remind them of that want of tenderness, and compassion, which they had shewn to him, through the whole course of their lives. On their asserting their innocence, he will inform them, that their unkind and cruel behaviour to their brethren, was the same to him, as if it had been shewn to himself.—The awful sentence having passed, the final doom shall succeed: the former shall take possession of everlasting happiness; the latter shall be doomed to everlasting misery—Jesus having thus brought his heavenly discourse to a point, before he concluded it, reminded his disciples once more, but

46.

with

CHAP.
XXVI.
1. 2.

harshly into this service; and can only be supposed to mean, by the fairest rules of interpretation, that the kingdom of heaven is prepared from the foundation of the world, for those who render themselves worthy of it.

35. From the *general tenor* of scripture we are not to suppose that the stress is laid on occasional acts of mercy, or any acts of mercy at all, unless they flow from a true Christian motive—the devoting of ourselves, and all our acts of mercy to God. And yet we may suppose, that when the habit of benevolence is formed, an act of kindness to a fellow-creature, which flows from this principle, may find its reward, tho we may not think, at the time of performing that act, of its being required by God.

46. It may be remarked here, that the *same* word, (*αἰώνιον*,) is used to express both *future punishments*, and *future rewards*. One should suppose therefore it means to place the duration of both, on the same footing.

1. Here our Saviour concludes that elevated discourse, which began at the xxivth chapter, on a question proposed by the disciples, with regard to the time of the destruction of the temple.

From

with an exactness as to time, which he had not yet observed, that within two days the feast of the passover should be celebrated; and that he should then be betrayed into the hands of his enemies, who should put him to death.

His enemies were indeed then consulting against him. A meeting of the chief priests, scribes, and elders was held at the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, with a view to put a stop to the growing influence of Jesus, and his doctrines: and the question was, Whether it was advisable to apprehend him, and put him to death? But his credit with the people, and the difficulty of doing it, were such, that after much debating, it was thought an improper step; at least during the ensuing festival.

In the mean time, Jesus retired to Bethany, to the house of Simon, whom he had formerly cured of a leprosy. Here a woman coming in, respectfully anointed his head with very costly ointment; at which the disciples taking offence, called it a needless waste; and said, That ointment of such value, might have been sold for a considerable sum; and given to the poor. But Jesus told them, she had done well. You have the poor, said he, always with you: but me you have not always. I consider this action therefore as an embalm-

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From that event Jesus takes occasion to speak of the consummation of all things; blending with it the mortality of man, which to every individual has the effect of that consummation. From thence he proceeds (still parabolically) to shew, in chap. xxv, the duty of preparation for that great event. This very naturally introduces the parable of the ten talents; which shews, that every man has his gifts varied by Providence; that *his proper* preparation must consist in the improvement of those gifts; and that it will be expected the improvement shall be in proportion to the gift.—Then the last great scene opens—the general judgment; when all men shall be rewarded, and punished according to the use, or abuse, of their several gifts. Here our Saviour shews, how much the stress shall be laid on acts of mercy, and kindness. Thus he brings his discourse home to the feelings of men: and draws this divine instruction to one noble, grand, and interesting conclusion.

5. The Romans at the time of the passover, were so much afraid of insurrections, that they always doubled their city-guard.

ing.

13. ing of my body before my burial: and in whatever light you may consider it, it shall always be remembered in her favour.

14. 15. 16. It was at this time that Judas Iscariot, leaving Jesus, and his fellow-disciples privately, went to the chief priests, and offered to betray his master to them. They had at that time, dropped the design of apprehending Jesus at the passover: but on such an offer they resumed it, and agreeing with Judas for a sum of money, they sent him back with instructions to give them the earliest notice of his master's privacy.

17. In the mean time the passover approaching, the disciples asked
18. Jesus, where he would have it provided? He bad them go into the city; where they should find a person circumstanced as he described; to whom they should make known his intention of eating the pass-
19. 20. over at his house. This was accordingly done. The passover was provided; and Jesus went with his disciples to celebrate it in the evening.

14. It is probable that Judas had all along followed Jesus through *temporal views*; but being now at length convinced, that his expectations had no grounds; and having no faith in his master's *spiritual promises*, he deliberated, how he might turn the mistake he had made in life to the best advantage.

15. If the thirty pieces of silver were shekels (as they probably were) it was the price of a slave (Exod. xxi. 32) which is very remarkable.—The sum amounted to about £3. 15s. of our money.

16. The Jews had dropped the design of apprehending Jesus, because of the people; but having now gotten an opportunity of seizing him privately in the night, they determined to have him examined by the high priest, and condemned by the Roman governor early in the morning, before the people could get together; and if they could put him fairly into the hands of the Roman soldiery, there was no further fear of rescue—All this was executed, as it had been planned.

20. Bp. Pearce inserts here an excellent note, in which he discusses the point, whether the paschal lamb was killed in private houses, or only in the temple. Philo is his authority for the former supposition: Josephus for the latter. After weighing both sides, he inclines to Philo.

In the midst of supper, Jesus told them openly, that one of them should betray him. All enquired with great earnestness, and marks of sorrow, which of them he meant? Jesus told them, it was one, who even then eat with him. It is necessary, said he, that the son of man should die: but that necessity is no excuse for him, by whom he is betrayed. That man's sin is great indeed. 21. 22. 23. 24.

On this Judas himself had the boldness to ask Jesus, whether he were the person? To which Jesus replied in such language as shewed plainly, that he was. 25.

Jesus then taking bread, blessed, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Eat this in remembrance of my body that is given for you. Then taking a cup, he blessed it likewise; and bad them all drink of it, in remembrance of his blood, that was shed for the remission of sins. He then told them he appointed this commemoration in the room of the Jewish passover. 26. 27. 28. 29.

After they had thus celebrated the passover, they sang an hymn, and retired to the mount of Olives. 30.

23. *He that dipped with me in the dish*; that is, in the basin of vinegar, in which the Jews dipped their bitter herbs at the celebration of the passover.

25. We have here one of those frightful examples of hardened wickedness, often seen in common life, which against all admonition, checks, and remonstrances, obstinately perseveres in some wicked deed, which has been undertaken. Even in improved understandings, we often find the corrupt heart hath its reasonings to support the *wickedest actions*, against the *strongest conviction*.

29. This passage in the original is obscure: but if we compare it with Luke xxii. 16, and likewise with the event, we are led to suppose this to be the most consistent meaning, which the words will admit. *I will not drink henceforth*, I will have the passover now abolished; and wine shall be henceforth drunk in a new way, as I institute it. *Till I drink it*, may be an expression equivalent to its being done by my appointment.

30. The words in the original will bear to be translated, they *repeated* a hymn, or thanksgiving.—It is not every body, perhaps who can sing; and therefore psalmody cannot be imposed as a duty.

31. Then Jesus again reminded them of his approaching sufferings. This night, said he, will put your constancy to the test—That prophecy of the Messiah shall be fulfilled; *I will smite the shepherd,*
 32. *and the sheep shall be scattered.* Be not however discouraged: when I am risen again, I will meet you in Galilee.

33. Peter grieved to think, that Jesus had any doubt of the constancy of his disciples, declared, that for himself at least, nothing could ever shake his fidelity.

34. Jesus checking his confidence, assured him, that, that very night, before the cock should crow, he should three several times deny him.

35. Peter with the same earnest zeal cried out, he might die with him; but to deny him, was impossible: to which the other disciples assented.

36. 37. Jesus proceeding a little farther to a part of the mount of Olives called Gethsemane, from the oil-presses, which were there, bad Peter, James, and John follow him to a more retired part of the
 38. 39. mountain. Here he was in great agony, which drew from him strong expressions of distress. Then leaving the three disciples a few paces, and ordering them to watch, he fell on the ground, and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from
 40. me; nevertheless not as I will; but as thou wilt. Returning to

31. Zech. xiii. 7.

39. What the particular circumstances were, which in so high a degree imbibtered the death of our blessed Saviour, we are not told; but certainly they must have been circumstances of a very aggravating nature, which could draw from so exalted a character those impassioned expressions, both before, and at the time of his death. How far the guilt of a sinful world, and the office of atonement, might aggravate his last sufferings, who can tell? In the other evangelists, especially in St. Mark, our blessed Saviour's agonies in the garden, are expressed in still stronger terms.

40. We may suppose, what is not improbable from the whole tenor of the relation, that the disciples were not *literally asleep*; tho not in that wakeful, vigilant disposition, which so great a crisis required.

them,

them, he found them asleep. What, said he to Peter, could you not watch one hour with me? Watch, and pray, that God may enable you to bear this great trial, which is coming upon you. The spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak. Then leaving them again, he cried with great earnestness, O my father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it; thy will be done! A second time finding them asleep, he went away, and prayed in the same impassioned manner; and finding them asleep a third time; he awoke them; saying, The cause of your watching is now over. But new trials approach. The hour of darkness is at hand. I am now betrayed into the power of my enemies.

He had scarce spoken, when a number of armed men from the chief priests, and elders entered the place, with Judas at their head; who according to a sign agreed on, coming up to Jesus, saluted him. Jesus asking him his intention, the armed men immediately came upon him, and seized him. One of the disciples seeing such violence offered to his master, drew a sword, and struck a person near him, who happened to be one of the servants of the high-priest, and cut off his ear. Jesus rebuking this violent disposition in general, and especially on this occasion, said if he wanted aid, it were easy for

41. *The spirit indeed is willing: but the flesh is weak.* The tenderness of this excuse is inimitable; and its being uttered in the midst of the greatest distress, is a noble example to us.—I cannot conceive on what grounds any commentators, as some do, suppose Jesus to speak of himself.

42. The best commentators suppose, that Jesus did not pray for the *removal of death*; which indeed would have been inconsistent with the whole scheme of redemption; John xii. 27: but only for the removal of those sufferings (whatever they were) which he then underwent. See Mark xiv. 35, where this *cup* is explained to mean this *hour*.

45. This great indifference in the disciples, shewed how little they were yet affected with the magnitude of that event, in which they were now about to be involved.—Bowyer conjectures the expression, *sleep on now, and take your rest*; should rather be put interrogatively; *do you still sleep on, and take your rest?* This certainly makes the sense better.

47. It is probable, that when Jesus retired from the other disciples at Gethsemane, Judas took that opportunity to slip away, and go to the chief priests.

54. him to apply for it in any proportion from heaven. But how then, he added, would this great work, in which I am engaged, be accomplished?

55. Then turning to the armed men, he asked them, why they came in that forcible, and secret manner to apprehend him in the night? and why, if they had law, and justice on their side, they did not apprehend him openly in the temple, where he might always have been found?—But your employers, said he, unwittingly fulfil
56. 57. 58. the great scheme of God, and all the prophecies that introduce it,

From Gethsemane the guards immediately led Jesus to the palace of Caiphas, the high priest, where the elders of the Jews were already assembled.

The disciples, in the mean time, seeing that all was now over, took the means of securing themselves by flight: but Peter, following at a distance, entered the palace, and mixing with the servants, waited the event.

59. 60. 61. As soon as Jesus was brought before the high-priest, every method was used to suborn evidence against him: and tho many false witnesses were produced, yet nothing criminal, in any degree, could be made out. At length two men deposed, that they had heard him say, *he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in*
62. *three days.* It was well known in what figurative sense Jesus had used that expression. However the high-priest, rising from his seat, took it up, as if it had contained criminal matter; and asked Jesus,
63. what he had to say in his defence? Jesus was silent: on which the

56. I render this verse, according to a conjecture of Bowyer's, who would translate, *το το δε ολον γεγονεν*, *all this is done*; which makes them the words of Christ. According to our translation, they are the words of St. Matthew.

high-priest adjured him, by the living God, to say, whether he were the Messiah, the son of God ?

Jesus thought proper to answer him in the affirmative ; and added, that the Jewish nation should shortly see a dreadful instance of his power ; when they should be called to a severe account for their infidelity, and impenitence. 64.

Then the high-priest tearing his garment as if in horror at hearing such impieties, cried out, What need we further witnesses ? you all hear his blasphemy. 65.

The whole assembly with one mouth, assenting, he was pronounced guilty. 66.

Jesus was then left in the hands of the high-priest's servants ; who seemed as if licensed to exercise every degree of indignity, they could invent. 67. 68.

While these things were transacting, Peter sat with the servants in the hall, where he was challenged by a maid-servant, who drew the attention of the rest upon him, by declaring, that she had seen him with Jesus of Galilee. Peter avowed solemnly before them all, that he knew nothing of the matter. However not thinking himself sufficiently safe, he went out into the portico ; where another maid saw him ; and told those who were standing near, that, that person (pointing to Peter,) had been seen with Jesus of Nazareth. Peter overhearing her, denied it with an oath, declaring he did not so much as know the man. Others coming up, told Peter, he certainly was one of them, for his very speech discovered him to be a Galilean.—But Peter in great agitation, denied with many imprecations, that he knew any thing of Jesus. Soon afterwards hearing 69.
70.
71.
72.
73.
74. 75.

65. The rabbies say, that *he who beareth blasphemy, is bound to rend his garments : and the garments thus rent, are never again to be repaired.*

a cock crow, he remembered the words of his master; and retiring to a secret place, gave vent to the most embittered passion of grief.

CHAP.
XXVII.

1. 2.

As Judea was a Roman province, the Jews could not legally put a criminal to death. Being resolved however to proceed against Jesus in a legal way; and thinking they had now obtained sufficient matter of accusation against him, they carried him very early in the morning before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

3.

In the mean time, Judas, finding, (what perhaps he did not expect) that his master was condemned; carried back to the chief priests, in an agony of despair, the money he had received; as if hoping to undo the horrid deed he had committed. In vain he told them, that he had betrayed an innocent person. Answers of levity, and scorn were all that he received. Distracted by his guilty thoughts, he threw down the money in the temple; and rushing out, put an end to his life.

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The chief priests afterwards, not thinking it proper to place this money among the offerings of the temple, laid it out in a burying-ground for strangers: from whence that field was afterwards called *aceldama*, or the field of blood. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy

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9. 10.

of

2. The Roman governor usually resided at Cæsarea; but he often came to Jerusalem at the great feasts, to prevent disturbances.

3. These were some of the priests employed in the ministration of the temple, equally in conspiracy against Jesus, but not among those, who led him to Pilate.

5. *Ἀπνῆχαι* may signify *deprived of breath*; and the best way to reconcile what is said of the death of Judas here, with what is said of it in Acts i. 18, may perhaps be, that when he had thrown down the money, he ran out of the temple, and in a fit of despair, threw himself down one of the precipices, on which it stood.

7. Thirty pieces of silver was a trifling price for a field near Jerusalem: but we must consider, it had been dug up for earth for potters-vessels; and therefore of little value in itself, tho sufficiently good for the purpose intended. It might also have been, as it probably was, a very small plot of ground.

10. It is remarkable, that this prophecy is not found in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah (xi. 13.) Many things have been said to rectify this mistake; but nothing is more common than

the

of Jeremiah: *they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, and gave them for the potter's field.*

Jesus being brought before the governor, was accused chiefly of a design to erect a new kingdom in Judea, in opposition to the Romans. This was supposed to be the best plea they could urge. Pilate, who did not seem to lay much stress upon it; and yet could not intirely neglect it, carelessly asked Jesus, whether he pretended to be the king of the Jews? Jesus told him, that his kingdom was of a very different nature from the kingdoms of this world. 11.

The chief priests then brought other accusations against him; to which Jesus gave no answer, leaving the governor, who was not a little surprized at his silence, to make what use he pleased of the several charges they brought. 12. 13. 14.

Pilate however clearly saw, that the whole prosecution was malicious. He was greatly inclined also to favour Jesus from a private motive. He had just received a message from his wife; informing him, that she had been greatly affrighted that morning in a dream, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

the mistake of one name for another. Some original transcriber might first have made it: from whence it might have been copied by others. Bp. Hall's conjecture is ingenious, that the abbreviation of *Zēu* might have been mistaken for *Iēu*: but Wetstein expressly says, that neither this abbreviation, nor any similar one, is to be found, *ne quidem junioris ævi codice ullo, nedum in vetustioribus.*—Others say, that *Jeremiah*, which was placed at the head of the prophets, is mentioned as the *title* only; as the *Psalms* (Luke xxiv. 44) for the same reason include other books of scripture.—Others again explain this difficulty, by saying that the four last chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremiah. See Mede's works p. 709. 963. 1022.

11. See John xviii. 36.

14. It appears, that Jesus answered both Pilate, and the chief priests, to proper, and pertinent questions, *Art thou the Christ? Art thou the king of the Jews?* But to frivolous questions, he made no answer to either.

19. From this account it appears, how very early in the morning Pilate had sat in judgment, with a view no doubt to oblige the chief priests, (see a note on Matt. xxvi. 16). It may be further remarked on this passage, that among heathen superstitions it was one, that morning-dreams were the most ominous.

on account of the innocent person, whose cause was then before him; and begged he would have no further hand in it. He determined therefore within himself on an expedient, which he thought might save Jesus.

20. 21. It was a custom at the feast of the passover, for the governor to release some prisoner, at the option of the people; and as there happened to be at that time, in prison, one Barabbas, a very notorious offender; Pilate proposed this person, and Jesus, to the people for their option: not doubting, but that, prejudiced as they were, they would give Jesus the preference to a murderer. But he found himself mistaken. When he put the question, all present (who at that early hour, seem to have consisted chiefly of the high-priest's servants, and retainers) demanded Barabbas. What then, said Pilate, shall I do with Jesus? They all cried out, Let him be crucified. But what offence, said Pilate, hath he been guilty of? On which the clamour increased, Let him be crucified.
24. Pilate seeing plainly, that all he said, served only to increase the tumult, called for water, and washing his hands before them all, said, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. Let it be your doing. On this they all vehemently cried out, His blood be
- 25.

24. This mode of purification was both a sacred, and a heathen custom. The author of the 73d psalm speaks of *washing his hands in innocency*; and Virgil introduces Æneas saying,

Me, bello e tanto egressum, et cæde recenti,
Attrectare nefas, donec me flumine vivo
Abluero

Æn. II. 718.

25. It is remarkable that Josephus, in his description of the siege of Jerusalem, tells us, that such numbers of the Jews were crucified by the Romans, “ that there wanted wood for “ crosses, and room to place them.”

25. The timidity of Pilate in thus giving up an innocent person to the clamour of an enraged multitude, is easily accounted for, by the awe, under which all Roman governors stood, of the leading persons in their several provinces; who had it in their power to complain of

mal

be on us, and on our children ! Pilate therefore at length overcome by their clamour, releas'd Barabbas ; and condemned Jesus to be scourged, and crucified.

He was then delivered into the hands of the soldiers, who had the care of the execution ; and was carried into the guard room. Here the whole cohort being called together, adorned him with a scarlet robe ; and putting a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his right hand, bowed the knee before him, crying, Hail, king of the Jews. Then rising from their knees, they spit upon him, and taking the reed out of his hand, they struck him with his own mock-sceptre. Having thus satiated their brutal malice, they put his own garments on him, and led him to a place called Golgotha ;

27.

28, 29.

30.

31, 32, 33.

maladministration. The emperors, were always ready to lend a willing ear to these complaints, as they furnished pretences to squeeze into their own coffers, the sums, which rapacious governors had drawn from the people.—We have another instance of the same kind in Acts xxiv. 27.

25. The Romans commonly scourged malefactors, before they put them to death. Turpilus condemnatus, verberatusque capite pœnas solvit. Sal. Bell. Jug.

29. The earliest Christian writers say nothing of its being a crown of *thorns* ; and from the word in the original (*ακανθας*) we may as well suppose it made of the plant, which Virgil calls the *mollis acanthus*. It is very probable indeed that the idea was rather of mockery, than of cruelty. Beating him with a reed seems not intended to hurt him ; but only to ridicule his mock-authority.

29. It is evident, from this mode of mockery among the soldiers, how much the Roman pride was affected, by Jesus's being called the *king of the Jews*. For tho Pilate had more sense, than to be misled by so silly a forgery ; yet the chief priests knew well, what they were about, in throwing it out among the Roman soldiers.—After this idle accusation had served their purpose, they were unwilling to have the idea prevail ; and therefore wished Pilate to alter an inscription which he had put up in derision. See John xix. 21.

32. It is supposed, that by the *cross* here, is meant only the cross-piece of wood, to which the criminal was nailed ; and which he carried with him. See Matt. x. 38. 'This was called *furca* : and hence the word *furcifer*.

33. Golgotha, or Mount Calvary, both signifying the *place of a skull*, was a very little way out of the western gate of Jerusalem.

compelling one Simon, a Cyrenian, to assist him in bearing his cross.

34.

When he came to the place, after the fatigue he had undergone, they gave him, in the same spirit of mocking, a draught of vinegar and gall; which he just tasted. Having nailed him to the cross, between two thieves; they fixed over his head an inscription, *This is Jesus, the king of the Jews*: and fulfilling a prophecy undesignedly, by parting his garments among them, and casting lots on his vesture, they sat down, and watched him.

35. 36. 37.
38.39. 40. 41.
42. 43. 44.

Then began a cruel scene of mockery from those who attended. *Thou that destroyest the temple, they cried, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross.* Even the chief priests, and elders, who attended the execution in person joined in these inhuman taunts: *He saved others; himself he cannot save.—If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said I am the son of God.*—Even the very thieves, who were crucified with him, reviled him.

34. Some suppose, it was an anodyne draught, which was often given to criminals; but from the hands which administered this, we are more readily led to a different supposition.

35. Crucifixion was esteemed so dreadful among the Romans, that the word *cruciatius*, which expresses the most exquisite torment, is derived from it.

35. Pf. xxii. 18.

39. Not perhaps from such of the common people as happened to be present, and were disinterested on the occasion. They behaved, as described by St. Luke xxiii. 48. Being unable to do anything for him, in disconsolate sorrow, *they smote their breasts and returned.* And yet some suppose, that the common people were, at this time, in general, alienated from Jesus; as they found that all their expectations of his being a temporal leader were now vanished: and to this opinion a passage in John (ii. 24) seems to give some countenance.—But, I think on the whole, the other opinion has more the appearance of truth.

44. There is no great difficulty in reconciling this with St. Luke's account of the penitent thief. No liberty is more commonly taken in language, than that of putting singulars for plurals; and plurals for singulars.

This

This great catastrophe began about nine o'clock ; and soon after
 a supernatural darkness overshadowing the whole scene, continued
 till the death of Jesus. Six hours he hung upon the cross in patient
 sufferance. As nature was exhausted he cried out, in a loud im-
 passionate tone ; *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, which signifies, *My God,*
my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? On this one of those who stood
 by, dipping a sponge in vinegar, and putting it at the end of a reed,
 lifted it to his mouth : while others not understanding his words ;
 but supposing he called for Elias, cried out, Let him alone ; let
 us see whether Elias will come to save him.

45.

46.

47. 48. 49.

Jesus again crying with a loud voice, breathed out his soul.
 Immediately the veil of the temple separated : all nature seemed con-
 vulsed : the earth trembled : the rocks rent, and many bodies of
 faints arose, and appeared after his resurrection in Jerusalem. Asto-
 nishment, in the mean time, seized the guards ; and the centurion,
 who

50. 51. 52.
53.

54.

45. See Mark xv. 25.

45. This darkness is mentioned by the ancient Christians, from Phlegon, and Thellus, as an eclipse of the sun. But as the moon was full at the passover, that could not be the case. The best interpretation is, that it was occasioned by dark clouds drawn before the sun.

46. This passage is the beginning of Psalm 22d ; in which is contained the most circumstantial prophecy of the death of Christ. It is supposed therefore by some, that our Saviour by repeating the first verse of this psalm, made the application of the whole to himself.

50. The different evangelists express the act of Christ's dying, by different words. St. Matthew's is the most remarkable, ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα, he *dismissed his soul*. This is exactly suitable to his words in John x. 18.

51. Sandys, and Maundrel, both speak of fissures in the rocks, which they had seen at Jerusalem ; and which are supposed to have been rent at this time. Nay we are told, that a deist lately travelling through Palestine, was converted by seeing one of them, (Fleming's Christol V. II. p. 97.) That these fissures which now exist were made in the rocks at the time of our Saviour's death, is matter of conjecture only : but that they have been made by some natural convulsion, is very evident from the correspondent sides of the chasms.

54. This exclamation from a heathen soldier, is much of the same import with that, which Virgil puts in the mouth of Dido on seeing Æneas ;

Credo equidem, (nec vana fides) genus esse deorum.

who attended, cried out in horror, Surely this person was the offspring of some God.

55. 56. 57. In the evening, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, who had at-
58. 59. 60. tended the ministry of Jesus, having obtained Pilate's leave, piously
61. took the body from the cross; and wrapping it in fine linen laid it in a tomb, which he had hewn for himself in a rock. He then closed the mouth with a large stone, which had been fitted to it. — This mournful solemnity was attended by Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Joseph; who with other women, had accompanied Jesus from Galilee; and had been spectators, at a great distance, of the whole event.

62. 63. 64. The next morning, which was the day after the passover, the chief priests, and elders went to Pilate; and begged he would set a guard over the sepulchre; For this impostor, said they, in his life time, declared, that he would rise again on the third day; and if his disciples should carry off the dead body in the night, and say he was risen; it might occasion greater mischief, than any that had yet happened. 65. Pilate gave them leave to employ what means they pleased, and what soldiers they thought necessary. Having sealed up the sepulchre therefore with great care, they left it with full security under a sufficient guard.

C H A P.
XXVIII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

Very early the next morning, which was the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen, and the other women, went to the sepulchre, with
an

It is not improbable however, that this officer might before have heard much of Jesus, and of his pretensions: and might now be thoroughly converted by these grand events. If so, his exclamation should receive a Christian, rather than a heathen interpretation.

60. Burying criminals was not only allowed, but enjoined by the Jewish law. Deut. xxi. 22.

1. There is considerable difficulty in reconciling the accounts of the several evangelists, with regard to the time, when the women came to the sepulchre. For myself, I lay little stress on these unimportant variations. They who think the truth of Christianity more concerned

an intention to imbalm the body. But to their great astonishment they found the sepulchre laid open; rent, as it seemed, by an earthquake. An angel, illuminating the place with splendor, sat upon the stone; and the guard, terrified into stupefaction, lay scattered about the ground like dead men.

Be not you afraid, said the angel to the women: I know whom you seek—your crucified saviour. He is not here; but is risen, as he himself foretold.—Look at the place where your Lord lay; and go tell his disciples the great event; and that he will meet them in Galilee. 5.
6.
7.

They with fear, and great joy, departing, met Jesus himself; and falling down at his feet, they worshipped him. Be not afraid, said he; continue your errand; and tell my brethren to meet me in Galilee. 8.
9.
10.

In the mean time, the guard recovering from their terror, gave information to the chief priests of the whole transaction. The chief priests immediately called a council; and after much debating, engaged the soldiers by a promise of indemnity, and a large bribe, to give out that the disciples stole away the body, while they slept: and this strange story was long propagated among the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation. 11.
12. 13. 14.
15.

While these things were transacting, the disciples having received the commands of Jesus, left Jerusalem, and went into Galilee, to 16.

concerned in them, may find some satisfaction on this point, in Mr. West's observations on the resurrection; and perhaps more in Dr. Benson's life of Christ.—One observation may be made here, that if the women had known, that the sepulchre was sealed, and guarded, they would probably have thought every attempt vain to imbalm the body. We must suppose therefore they knew nothing of that transaction.

13. The chief priests were not willing to bring the affair before Pilate; because if he had dismissed the soldiers with impunity, it would have brought great credit to the truth of the resurrection. If the chief priests could have *proved any neglect*, there is no doubt, but they would have prosecuted the soldiers to the utmost.

meet

17. meet him on a mountain which he had appointed. There they saw him ; and all their doubts being cleared away, they worshipped him ; and received his last instructions.
18. 19. 20. All power, said Jesus, giving them his last charge, is intrusted to me, in heaven, and on earth. Go you therefore under my authority, and baptize all nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to obey all the precepts, which from time to time, I have given you : and tho I am now about to leave you, be assured, that you shall always be under my particular influence, and direction.

17. I explain the latter part of this verse on the authority of Beza ; who, instead of *οι δε εδιπλασαν*, reads *εδε εδιπλασαν*. It is certainly a good emendation : but I know not, on what authority it rests.—However if the reading stood, as in our translation, it is a difficulty of no great consequence.

END OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO.
ST. MATTHEW.

P R E F A C E
T O
S T. M A R K ' s G O S P E L.

SOME writers suppose, there are two persons mentioned in the New Testament of the name of Mark; and are at a loss, which of them wrote the following gospel. But Dr. Lardner, having examined all that is said on the subject, gives it plainly as his opinion; that there was only one person of that name.

Another dispute hath arisen with regard to the originality of St. Mark's gospel. Many suppose it to be only an epitome of St. Matthew. But there seems to be no good foundation for such a supposition. It is true, this evangelist touches on few facts, which St. Matthew does not mention; and he generally treats them in St. Matthew's order. His account also of most of these facts is less detailed, than that of St. Matthew. But at the same time, it is obvious, that St. Mark dilates on some facts, which St. Matthew relates concisely; and often adds circumstances, which St. Matthew omits.—In the second chapter, for instance, a number of circumstances are recorded with regard to the paralytic, which are not mentioned by St. Matthew: in the eighth chapter, some circumstances with regard to the miracle among the Gadarenes; and in the ninth, with regard to the transfiguration. In the twelfth, a much more circumstantial account is given of the Scribe: and in the same chapter, the widow's mite is mentioned; which is totally omitted by

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St.

St. Matthew. It may be added, that in some trifling instances the two evangelists vary; as in the fifth chapter St. Mark speaks of one demoniac; whereas St. Matthew mentions two. Several other little variations might be mentioned, which the reader may see collected in the seventh chapter of Dr. Lardner's account of the writers of the New Testament.—It is probable also, that if St. Mark had epitomized St. Matthew, he would not have left wholly untouched the circumstances of the birth of Christ—the sermon on the mount—and other particulars, which are so very remarkable in St. Matthew's gospel.—The general opinion is, that this gospel was revised by St. Peter, at Rome; and was written for the sake of the christians there, who had probably never seen any other gospel.

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S T. M A R K.

CHAP. I.

1. 2. 3.

BEFORE the appearance of Jesus Christ, the prophecies of Malachi, and Isaiah were fulfilled in John the baptist : *Behold I send my messenger before thy face, to prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord : make his paths straight.*

This holy man, austere, and mortified in the whole manner of his life, frequented the desert parts of Judea : and called men to repentance, as the only condition of forgiveness.

4. 5. 6.

Many attended him, not only from the country of Judea, but from Jerusalem ; and confessing their sins, were baptized.

With great earnestness he admonished them, in the course of his preaching, not to mistake him for the Messiah ; whose coming it was his business merely to declare. I, said he, baptize you only with water : but he shall baptize you with the holy spirit of God."

7. 8.

While John was thus preaching, and baptizing in the wilderness, Jesus himself came to him to be baptized : and on this occasion received a great, and full testimony from God of his divine mission. As he ascended from the water, the clouds opened ; and a glorious

9. 10. 11.

2. Mal. iii. 1.

3. Isa. xl. 3.

light spreading round him, a divine voice was heard, "Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

12. 13. After his baptism, Jesus was led, by an impulse of the spirit of God, into a desolate, and solitary country; where he continued forty days in fasting, prayer, and temptation; while angels ministered unto him.

14. 15. On the imprisonment of John, he went into Galilee; and there began to preach the gospel; declaring, that the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, which had so long been foretold by the prophets, was now about to take place: and exhorting men to believe, and accept, by repentance, and a change of heart, the gracious offers it made of salvation.

16. 17. 18. At the time, when Jesus began to preach, he began also to choose
19. 20. disciples. Sincere people, among the lower ranks, were the objects of his choice. As he walked along the shores of the lake of Genesareth, he found two fishermen, Simon, and Andrew, whom he called; and alluding to their employment, told them, they should become fishers of men. Soon after, he called two other fishermen, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. All four leaving their businesses, and relations, immediately followed him.

21. Accompanied by these attendants, he went to Capernaum, and
22. taught in the synagogue on the sabbath. His divine discourse struck all, who heard him, with astonishment: for they easily perceived, that the doctrines he conveyed, and the authority, with which he enforced them, were very different from the cold interpretations, and glosses of the scribes.

20. It is probable, from St. John's account, they had been before convinced by his miracles, and doctrine.

It happened, as he was teaching in the synagogue, there was a man possessed with an evil spirit; who cried out at the sight of him, acknowledging his divine power; and dreading the effects of it. Jesus having commanded the wicked spirit to leave him, the man, on suffering a violent convulsion, was perfectly restored. This great miracle had it's proper effect on the multitude, who considered it as a confirmation of his doctrine; and spread his fame through the country.

23. 24.
25. 26.
27. 28.

From the synagogue Jesus retired with his disciples to the house of Simon, whose mother-in-law they found lying ill of a fever. Jesus immediately healing her, she was able to attend them at supper.

29. 30.
31.

These miracles drew multitudes of people about him in the evening; insomuch, that the whole city, in a manner, was gathered before the door, bringing with them many who laboured under bodily disorders; and many, who were possessed with evil spirits; all of whom experienced the gracious effects of his almighty power. Nor would he suffer the evil spirits, tho they knew him, to make him known. Such testimony he abhorred.

32. 33. 34.

The next morning, rising before it was light, he retired to a secret place, to enjoy contemplation, and prayer. But his disciples, soon after, following, told him, how impatiently the people expected his return. Jesus however informing them, that he must not con-

35.
36. 37.
38. 39.

24. Better translated, *What hast thou to do with us?*

34. *Such testimony he abhorred.* There are different interpretations of this passage. Some suppose, that Jesus forbid them to speak, on the same principle, on which he forbid the person he had healed, to discover him; either as giving an example of modesty, or as preventing discovery. But to me it appears more consistent with the Messiah's character to abhor the testimony of wicked spirits, from the impropriety of the thing itself. Prophecy, miracles, and the purity of his doctrine were the proofs on which he rested his authority.

fine his labours to any one place, took a circuit round Galilee; preaching the gospel, and confirming the truth of it by miracles.

40. Among other objects of his compassion it happened, that a leper came to him, and kneeling down, begged, he would shew that divine power on him, which he had shewn on many others.
 41. 42. 43. Jesus healing him with a touch, ordered him to keep the matter
 44. private—to present himself to the priest, who was the proper judge of his cure—and to offer what Moses commanded. But the man,
 45. in a transport of joy, and gratitude, on finding himself so suddenly healed, took great pains in publishing the matter. Such crouds therefore resorted to Jesus in all the great towns, that he was obliged to retire to solitary places; where such only, as were under the influence of higher motives, than curiosity, attended him.

CHAP.
II.

1. 2.

Some days after, he returned to Capernaum. This was presently known; and numbers of people came to him; whom, as usual, he instructed.

3. While the people thus crouded around him, it happened, that
 4. a paralytic was brought to be healed. As the men, who carried him, could not easily get at Jesus through the croud, they went round the house, and finding access to the roof, they opened a private door, and let down the sick man, together with his couch, into the room before Jesus. Jesus seeing such an instance of faith,
 5. told the sick man his sins were forgiven.

44. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

4. The eastern houses were flat at the top; where was commonly a door, which communicated with the inside of the house. Often there was a ladder, or stairs on the outside, which must have been the case with the house described Mark xiii. 15. The door may be supposed to be fastened; and the word *εξορξαντες* may signify, they *burst it open*. Dr. Shaw supposes, from the form of the Barbary houses, that Jesus was teaching in a court yard; and that the sick man was brought within the gate; carried up stairs; and let down from the roof to that part of the yard, which was nearest to him.

5. See a note on Matt. ix. 2.

In the room, at that time, were sitting several of the Scribes, 6. 7.
 who did not care to speak openly; but in their hearts had great
 indignation, at what they esteemed so blasphemous a speech. Jesus 8. 9. 10. 11.
 knowing their thoughts, asked them, Whether it was easier to 12.
 forgive the man's sins, or to heal his disease? But that you may
 be assured, said he, I can do the first, you shall see me per-
 form the second. On this, with a word speaking, he healed
 the man so perfectly, that instead of being carried on his bed, he
 rose up, and carried it away himself; to the great astonishment of
 all present, who glorified God, declaring, that Jesus was such a
 prophet, as had not yet appeared.

From this straitened place, Jesus led the multitude to an open 13.
 situation by the side of the lake; and there preached the gospel to
 them.

After he had sent them away, he passed by one of the tax- 14.
 gatherers booths, which belonged to Matthew, the son of Alpheus;
 who, on Jesus's calling him, left his gainful employment, and
 followed without delay.

From hence Jesus went to the house of his new disciple; where 15.
 he sat down at table with many of Matthew's former acquaintance;
 people of loose morals, and ordinary reputation. The Scribes, and 16.
 Pharisees, observing this, inquired of his disciples, Why their master
 demeaned himself by conorting with such disreputable people?

Jesus asked them, Whether the healthy or the sick had more 17.
 need of a physician? and added, that his errand in this world, was,
 to apply himself rather to the sinner, than to the righteous.

On an occasion of the same kind the disciples of John the Baptist, 18.
 and of the Pharisees, came to him, expressing their wonder, that
 he bred up his followers with so little austerity.

14. He too, it is probable, as the other disciples, had been before convinced by the doctrine,
 and miracles of Jesus.

19. 20. I consider my disciples, said Jesus, like the friends of the bridegroom at a marriage. They mix in the indulgences of the marriage-feast; but never suppose these indulgences are to last
 21. 22. through life. Worldly habits must be broken by degrees. I cannot expect my disciples to break theirs at once. A new patch suits ill with an old garment: and new wine with old vessels.

23. Sometime after, as Jesus was walking, on the sabbath-day, through the corn-fields, his disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears of corn, and rubbing them in their hands, began to eat. It
 24. happened, that some of the Pharisees saw the action; and taking great offence at such a profanation of the sabbath, mentioned it to Jesus.

25. Is not the example of David, answered Jesus, sufficient to convince you, that in cases of necessity a liberty may be taken with a
 26. positive institution? David went into the house of God, you are informed, and not only eat the shew-bread himself; but distributed it also among his followers; tho the law ordains, that it should
 27. be eaten only by the priests. The sabbath therefore was made for man, not man for the sabbath. And if David's example is not
 28. sufficient to convince you; know further, that the son of man is Lord of the sabbath.

CHAP.
III.

1.
2.

On another sabbath, as Jesus was in a synagogue, a man happened to be there with a withered hand; which some of the Pharisees observing, were on the watch, whether he would heal him. Jesus

22. See a note with regard to the manner, in which the ancients preserved wine, Matt. ix. 17.

26. Abiathar was not high-priest at that time, see 1 Sam. xxi. 1. But *em* *Agiaðap* may signify, (as sometimes in the best Greek writers) *Abiathar putting him upon it*. We read afterwards in Samuel how much Abiathar, *who was afterwards high-priest*, was then in David's interest.

knowing their thoughts, called the man forth into the middle of the congregation; and then turning to the Pharisees, asked them, Whether they thought the sabbath was better observed by doing a good action; or by meditating a wicked one? 3. 4.

This obliging them either to deny a plain truth, or to condemn themselves: they held their peace.

Jesus moved with displeasure, and grief at such an instance of obstinacy, and hardness of heart, ordered the man to stretch out his hand; which he did, and instantly found it restored. 5.

The Pharisees abashed, beyond the power of reply, left the synagogue; and plotted in secret, with the Herodians, how they might destroy him. 6.

Jesus, in the mean time, retired to the side of the lake; where many people, from the coasts near Tyre, and Sidon on one side; and from Judea on the other, resorted to him; bringing with them, as usual, such as were possessed, and diseased. He healed their several infirmities, and enjoined silence on the evil spirits. But being crowded, and pressed by the people; and not able to speak to them commodiously, he got into a boat, and preached to them from thence. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

Jesus, about this time, calling a number of his particular followers to him, chose twelve, whom he meant to be the witnesses of his actions; and his assistants in preaching the gospel. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21.

19. Dr. Clark says, he carried them home with him to his own house; and tells us, it is plain from Matt. iv. 13, that *Jesus had a house of his own*.—I think it rather appears from Jesus's own account, that *he had not where to lay his head*.—Besides, I am not fond, at any rate, of entering into these particulars. If Jesus had a house of his own, it leads to many low, and trivial enquiries; Whether he kept servants? How that house was furnished? &c. which introduce low, domestic ideas; and tend rather to depreciate the dignity of that great character. *Obscurity* is often one of the great sources of the *sublime*; and an investigation of *circumstances* leads to *littleness*.

In consequence of this appointment, he gave them power to heal diseases, and to cast out evil spirits. Their names were Simon, whom he called Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, Jude, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot.

With these twelve Jesus returned to Capernaum, where the multitude, as usual, prevented his taking even the common refreshments of nature; at which his friends were not a little uneasy, fearing he might faint.

22. In the mean time, a body of Scribes, who came from Jerusalem, endeavoured to destroy the force of his miracles by ascribing them to the devil.

23. Jesus asked them, how they thought it possible, that the devil
24. 25. 26. should conspire against himself? His kingdom, in that case, he told them, like a house, or government divided against itself, 27. must inevitably perish. When you see the goods of a strong man, said he, destroyed, you naturally conclude, that he, who destroyed them, was still stronger. How is it then, that you do not, with the same readiness, suppose, when you see the devil dispossessed, 28. 29. 30. that he who dispossesses him, has superior power? To ascribe therefore to the devil, said Jesus, these miracles, so evidently

21. Dr. Whitby has shewn, in several instances, that the word ἐξίστην has often this meaning. And as it comes immediately after we are told, that Jesus *could not so much as eat bread*, it appears, as if there was a connection between the two expressions.——On the other hand, ἐξίστην is certainly capable of receiving the sense given in our translation: and in this sense, it seems connected with the words, which follow. His friends said *he was beside himself*; but the Pharisees said still worse, *that he had a devil*.——Bp. Pearce gives a third sense. He translates *lay hold into keep off*; and *him into it*; which the words, he says, will easily bear. The sense then is, *His friends seeing the multitude press on him, went out to keep them off*.—This I think is rather forced.——Bowyer conjectures that ἐλεγον does not imply what *his friends said*: but what *they said*, or what was commonly reported: but I cannot see the connection of this alteration.——On the whole, I prefer Dr. Whitby's interpretation.

wrought

wrought by the finger of God, is among those sins, which are the most difficult to repent of, and of course the most difficult to be forgiven.

On an occasion, which happened about this time, Jesus shewed, in how inconsiderable a light he considered all earthly connections, in comparison of those formed by piety, and religion. As the croud pressed around him, his mother, and other relations desired to speak with him; which was signified to him by the people, who sat near. Jesus turning round to his disciples, and to those, who seemed the most attentive, told them, that no earthly relationship had any weight with him, compared with that heavenly attachment, which was formed by souls united to him by doing the will of God.

31. 32.

Some time after, Jesus retiring again to the side of the lake, and the multitude crowding upon him, he got into a boat, and preached to them from thence. The truths he taught them were delivered in parables; among which the most remarkable was that of the sower.

CHAP.
IV.
1.

2.

As a husbandman, said he, was sowing his seed, some of the grain fell upon the beaten path; and were picked up by the birds. Some again fell on rocky ground, covered slightly with earth, and soon sprang up; but as the sun grew hot, they were immediately scorched for want of soil. Other grain fell among weeds; which grew up with them, and presently choaked them. But some finding a good soil, properly prepared to receive them, produced fruit in great abundance.—This parable Jesus recommended very particularly to the attention of the people.

3. 4.

5. 6.

7.

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9.

Afterwards, when he was alone with his disciples, they desired him to explain it.

10.

To

11. 12. To you, answered Jesus, the truths of the gospel may be plainly delivered: but to the prejudiced multitude I speak in parables; that they may be, as it were, their own instructors: for in them is fulfilled the prophet's denunciation, *This people hear indeed, but understand not; they see, but perceive not; so as to be converted, and saved.*—The parable however, said Jesus, is so easy, as to want
13. little explanation. The husbandman is the preacher of the gospel—
14. 15. and the different kinds of ground, represent the various dispositions of those, who receive it. The beaten path signifies those, on whose
16. 17. hardened hearts the gospel makes no impression. The shallow soil, on which the seed was scorched, exhibits such as listen to the gospel at first with apparent joy; but as soon as the heat of per-
18. 19. secution arises, their religion dies away. Again, the weedy soil, in which the seed was choked, is an emblem of those, who vainly endeavour to divide their affections between the gospel, and the world. The consequence is, that the cares, and pleasures of life
20. generally in the end stifle the efforts of religion. Lastly, the good ground represents those, who receive the gospel in the honesty, and
21. sincerity of their hearts; and live according to its rules.—It will be your parts hereafter, added Jesus, to manifest all these truths
22. to the world. Tho, at present, the undiscerning multitude cannot understand them; they are all intended for the future instruction of
23. mankind. Pay a just attention therefore to what you hear; and
24. be assured, that the more faithfully you distribute the word of truth to others, you shall receive it in the larger proportion your-
25. selves. It is a treasure, which, in the hands of those, who possess it in abundance, shall continually increase: while they, who hold it but in scanty measure, may soon lose the little they possess.

12. Isa. vi. 9. See a note on Matt. xiii. 15.

To the parable of the sower, Jesus added other parables in his discourses to the people. Particularly he shewed the progress of the gospel under the following illustration. 26. 27. 28. 29.

The husbandman, said he, casteth his seed into the ground. He sleepeth, and riseth; and pursueth his ordinary business. The seed unobserved continues growing on; till it hath attained, by imperceptible degrees, its full maturity. Then cometh the harvest, when it is cut down, and gathered into the barn.—For the gospel, added he, resembles a grain of mustard-seed; which is remarkable for being the least of all seeds, when sown; and the greatest of all plants, when grown up. 30. 31. 32.

In this manner Jesus instructed the people in parables, opening the truth by degrees to those, who were too much prejudiced to hear it at once; and throwing out representations of future times, which might hereafter confirm the christian in his faith. Every thing however, he explained in private to his disciples. 33. 34.

As the evening drew on, Jesus dismissed the multitude; and taking his disciples with him, fatigued as he was, got into a boat, which was preparing with several other little vessels, to pass the lake. 35. 36.

In the midst of the passage a violent storm arose, and the lake was so agitated, that they seemed in great danger. Jesus himself 37. 38. 39.

27. Καὶ καθεύδῃ, καὶ ἐγείνεται, βύτα, καὶ ἡμέραν. *He sleepeth, and riseth,* (in perfect security, and at his ease, according to the season) *night and day*—that is, he does not concern himself any farther about the corn, after it is sown; knowing that nature will do all that is requisite. Dormio, in latin, has this sense.——Our Saviour was the great sower of the seed: which afterwards, under the apostles, sprang up into so rich a harvest.—And thus the present ministers of the gospel often, it may be hoped, sow seed, which may afterwards grow up; tho it do not immediately appear.

36. Bowyer reads it otherwise. He places a full stop after αὐτοῦ; which makes the sense thus. *They take him.* (i. e. with them.) *When he was in the ship, and other ships with them, there arose, &c.*

was asleep; but being soon awakened by the terrified disciples, he rebuked the wind, and the sea, saying, Peace, be still. It was instantly calm: and Jesus then chid their vain fears, and want of faith; while they without excuse, could only express their astonishment in exclamations to each other.

40.

41.

C H A P.

V.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Jesus having landed on the coast of Gadara, was met by a demoniac. This unhappy man, since the time of his possession, had wandered, day and night, among the tombs; which were his only habitation; howling, and cutting himself with stones. The neighbourhood, to which he was a great annoyance, had endeavoured to bind, and secure him: but such was his amazing strength, that chains had been ineffectual.

6.

7. 8. 9. 10.

This person, fierce as he was, on seeing Jesus, ran towards him with marks of respect, and submission; calling him by his name; giving him the title of the son of God; and beseeching him not to torment him; and drive him out of the country.

Jesus, ordering the evil spirit to leave the man, asked his name? He was answered, that no name could suit so numerous a possession, but that of Legion.

11.

12.

13.

It happened that near the place, a great herd of swine was feeding; into which the evil spirits besought Jesus, that he would suffer them to enter. On receiving permission, the whole herd, which consisted of about two thousand, rushed down a precipice into the lake, and were drowned.

14. 15.

16.

The keepers of the swine presently spread abroad this great event; and people from all parts came crowding to the lake; where they saw the demoniac sitting, perfectly restored; and heard on the

5. The Jewish tombs were artificial caverns cut in rocks. See Mark xv. 46.

7. Better translated, *What hast thou to do with me?*

13. See remarks on this miracle Matt. viii. 32.

spot the circumstances of the whole affair : but struck with fear, they desired Jesus to leave the country. He seeing the time of their conversion not yet come, prepared to depart. The demoniac desired to accompany him, but Jesus left him behind as a witness of the greatness of the miracle, which he had performed.

Jesus had scarce arrived at the other side of the lake, when the multitude flocked together again to receive him.

Among them a person of superior dignity, a ruler of the synagogue, whose name was Jairus, came forward ; and falling down at the feet of Jesus, besought him to heal his daughter, who lay at the point of death. Jesus immediately went with him ; followed, as usual, by a great multitude.

As the croud pressed upon him, a woman, taking the advantage of it, came behind him, and privately touched his garment. She had been afflicted twelve years with a bloody flux, which had been deemed incurable : but hearing of the fame of Jesus, she was fully persuaded, that even this touch would be sufficient to effect her cure. She found it so, and was instantly healed.—But Jesus, knowing the fact, and, not chusing, that such an instance of faith should pass unobserved, turned round, and asked his disciples, who had touched him ? They seemed to wonder at the question, as the multitude was pressing him in every part. But as Jesus continued to look round, the woman finding she could not pass undiscovered, fell down before him, and confessed the truth. Jesus bidding her not be afraid, commended her faith ; and sent her away with an assurance, that her malady should not return.

During this interruption, a messenger met Jairus, informing him, that his daughter was dead ; and that it was needless to trouble

17. See a note on the parallel place in Matt. viii. 34.

19. See a note on Matt. xiv. 34.

36. 37. 38. Jesus any further. Jesus turning to the afflicted parent, bad him
39. 40. only believe, and he should see the power of God.

When they came to the house, Jesus told the mourners, who had begun their customary lamentations, that their grief was unnecessary; for the young woman was only asleep. At this they were ready to deride him, knowing she was dead. But he, removing all from the chamber, except three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John; and the father and mother of the young woman, took
41. her by the hand, and bad her rise: on which she not only returned
42. to life; but instantly recovered her health, and strength. Jesus
43. ordered, that something should be given her to eat; and forbad her parents to divulge the matter.

CHAP.
VI.

1.

2. 3.

Soon after, Jesus leaving Capernaum, went to Nazareth, where he had spent his youth: and going into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, he taught the people, as he had done in other places. At first, they were astonished at the wisdom, and power, with which he spake: but their prejudices soon overcoming their candor, they took great offence. Is not this, they cried, the carpenter? And are not all his mean relations among us? Whence came he by such wisdom, and authority?

4. 5. 6.

Jesus grieved at the prejudices of these unhappy people, who thus withstood their true interest, told them, It was no new indignity for a prophet to be discredited in his own country: and finding them at present, in no disposition to receive the gospel, he wrought only a few miracles on those, whose faith made them proper objects of his power; and leaving Nazareth, went to preach in other parts of the country.

38. See a note on Matt. ix. 23.

43. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

At the same time he sent the twelve apostles to preach 7.
 in different places; giving them power to confirm their doctrine
 by miracles. Make no preparation, said he, of superfluous things 8. 9.
 for your journey. Where you are kindly received in any town, 10.
 there remain, till you leave it: and where you are persecuted, 11.
 leave your persecutors to the judgment of God. You have done all
 that is required: and they have to answer for the sin of resisting such
 means of conviction, as Sodom, and Gomorrha never had.

With these instructions the apostles departed, and found them- 12. 13.
 selves enabled both to preach the gospel, and to confirm the truth
 of it by miracles.

The fame of Jesus was, by this time, spread through the country; 14. 15. 16.
 and various were the opinions of men about him. Some thought
 him Elias—others thought him one of the old prophets arisen from
 the dead—and many conceived, that if he were not one of the old
 prophets, he was at least a prophet equal to them. But the
 opinion of Herod was the most singular. He had just put John
 the baptist to death; and in the agitation of a guilty conscience,
 cried out; This is certainly that righteous man, whom I beheaded;
 who is risen again; and enabled to perform these mighty works.

13. In the original it is said, they *anointed with oil many that were sick*: and the same expression is used by St. James (v. 14.) In these passages the papists find their sacrament of *extreme unction*.—But how? Our Saviour often used an external action in working a miracle; but it was never conceived, that the virtue lay in the external action;—nor that the external action, independent of the power, was of any value. They may just as well say that making clay is a sacrament, because Jesus cured the eyes of a blind man with it.—Among the ancients, *unction* was thought a good remedy in many cases. Celsus recommends it: *Ungi corpus in acutis, et recentibus oportet*. De Med. ii. 14. Galen also observes, that *Unctiones adversus vim febrium auxilium esse* (Com. 4 in Hippoc.) The apostles therefore might use a common external action in effecting a miraculous cure. The action could not depreciate the miracle, as the cure was instant: and, in the mean time, this obvious lesson was inculcated, that we ought to use the means, which God Almighty hath put in our power; and trust him with the event, who can only render them effectual.

17. 18. 19. The circumstances of John's death were these.
20.

Herod had long had a great veneration for him; and had, on many occasions, shewn a deference to his advice. But on one occasion he took great offence. He lived at that time in a state of incest with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife: for which John, with great freedom, had reproved him. This immediately drew on John the resentment of Herodias; through whose instigation Herod imprisoned him; but could not be prevailed on to put him to death. It happened however, at a great feast, which Herod had made on his birth-day, that the daughter of Herodias, dancing before the king, pleased him so much, that in his gaiety, he promised, with an oath, to grant any request, she should make. Being instructed by her mother, she demanded the head of John the baptist. The king was mortified at the request; but for the sake of an oath taken in so public a manner, he granted what she asked. An executioner was sent to behead John; and the head was given to the daughter, who carried it to her mother.—The disciples of John afterwards obtained leave to bury the corpse.

30. The twelve apostles, in the mean time, returning to Jesus from their several missions, gave him an account of the miracles they had wrought; and of the success of their ministry.

31. 32. They were then in a place of much resort; and Jesus wishing to be a little more private; went with them into a boat, intending to land in a retired place. But the people, observing from the shore the course of the boat, pursued it from all parts; so that on his landing, he found a great multitude assembled. He was moved therefore with compassion at a croud, who appeared, he said, like sheep without a shepherd: and tho he was hungry and fatigued, and had retired to that lonely place merely for refresh-

21. *A convenient day* is a bad translation: it should be a *festive, or rejoicing day*.

ment, he began again the toil of instructing them, which he continued to a late hour.

The disciples however reminded him, as the evening drew on, of the inconveniences that might ensue on keeping the people fasting so long in that desolate country.

Do you then, said Jesus, give them provisions.

37.

That appeared impossible.

On this Jesus asked, what quantity of provision they had ?

38.

They answered, only five loaves, and two small fishes.

He then ordered his disciples to separate the people, and make them sit down in companies, of about fifty, or a hundred together.

39. 40.

41.

When they were all thus disposed, he took the bread, and fish; and giving thanks, distributed them, through the hands of his disciples, among the multitude. And tho there were about five thousand people; yet they were not only fully satisfied; but left behind them fragments, which filled twelve baskets.

42. 43. 44.

He then bad his disciples get into a boat, and pass over to Bethsaida, a town at the north end of the lake; and leave him to dismiss the people: which having done, he retired awhile to enjoy, in solitude, contemplation, and prayer.

45.

46.

In the mean time, night advancing, and the wind being boisterous, and contrary, Jesus saw from the shore the disciples in difficulty, and danger; and went to them walking on the surface of the lake. They supposing him to be a spirit, cried out with fear; till they knew his voice, bidding them not be afraid. As soon as he entered the boat, the wind ceased: while they,

47. 48.

49. 50.

52. 51.

40. The word *companies* expresses the original perhaps better than *ranks*.—Some suppose they sat down in companies, which contained an hundred; and that there were fifty of these companies: so that the whole multitude might easily be counted, according to the text, by hundreds, and by fifties. Fifty times an hundred makes five thousand.

48. See a note on Matt. xiv. 15.

forgetting the miracle of the loaves, were as much astonished, as if they had been totally unacquainted with his power.

53. They soon after landed in the country of Genesareth; where Jesus
54. 55. 56. being presently known, great crowds from all the towns, and villages in the neighbourhood, came to him, bringing sick people; whom they laid down in roads, and streets, wherever he passed, desiring only to touch his cloaths. Such instances of faith never passed unrewarded.

CHAP.
VII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

In the mean time, the fame of Jesus, thus every where increasing, gave great offence to the leading doctors of the law; and a body of them came from Jerusalem, on purpose to watch, and find out some pretence against him. His neglect of traditions afforded the best.—The tradition particularly, which enjoined the washing of hands before a meal, or after having been in mixed company, was religiously observed by the Pharisees, as a point of sanctity, beyond what the law required; and tended, among other exactnesses of the same kind, to gain them reverence with the people.

5. They came therefore to Jesus, and publicly reproved him for bringing up his disciples in a thorough neglect of this, among other holy observances.

6. 7. But Jesus bad them remember, what the prophet Isaiah had said of their fathers; which might be considered likewise as prophetic of them: *This people honoureth me with their lips; while their hearts are far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

8. 9. Do not you, said Jesus, in the most flagrant manner, set up your own traditions against the commandments of God? You know,

3. See a note on Matt. xv. 2.

6. It is not clear, whether the prophet does not speak here *directly* of the times of the Messiah.

9. *Full well ye reject.* Καλως ἀδευτετε. Ye totally reject.

how strictly the law enjoins honouring your parents, for instance, 10.
 which is a duty enforced even by the penalty of death. But your 11. 12. 13.
 tradition gives the people to understand, that if, instead of assisting
 their parents, they put their money into the treasury of the temple,
 it is more acceptable to God; thus making the commandment
 of no effect. Many other things of a similar nature might be
 mentioned.

Then turning from the Pharisees to the people, Jesus told them, 14.
 it was his business to give them juster notions of pollution, than
 any they received from Pharisaical traditions. No external un- 15.
 cleanness, said he, pollutes a man. It is what arises from his
 heart, that becomes his great pollution; and to which you ought 16.
 all particularly to attend.

Then leaving the multitude, he retired into a house; where 17.
 the disciples desired him to explain to them what he had said to
 the people about pollution.

Jesus expressing his surprize at their wanting information on so 18. 19. 20.
 easy a subject, shewed them how impossible it was that any *moral*, 21. 22. 23.
 stain should arise from *external* pollution; because it had no con-
 nection with the heart. But bad thoughts, said he, and every
 kind of wickedness, which have a connection with *it*, effectually
 pollute a man.

From Genneth Jesus removed to the borders of Tyre, and 24.
 Sidon, where he went privately into a house, and wished for a while

11. The word *Corban* signified any sacred offering: and the Jews adopted the word into a
 vow. As, for instance, a man would say to his parent, *It is Corban, whatever advantage you*
might receive of me: it then became sacrilege to apply that thing to private use. Josephus tells
 us (Antiq. Jud. lib. IV. cap. 4.) the priests could absolve from this vow; for which they
 required a fee of fifty shekels.

17. The difficulty with the disciples probably was some confusion between legal, or cere-
 monial uncleanness, and that of the heart.

25. 26. to be concealed from the people. But it was impossible. A heathen woman of that country having heard of his being there, came to him, begging his assistance to cure her daughter, who was an unhappy demoniac. 27. Jesus, desirous to exhibit an instance of Gentile faith, told her, he was not sent to the heathen, but to the Jews. It is not right said he, to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. 28. She, applying the figure to her own case, answered; True, Lord; but the dogs under the table may, without offence, eat the children's offalls.—An answer, so full of faith, and knowledge, drew a high commendation from Jesus; and an assurance, that she should find (as she did) her daughter perfectly recovered.

31. From the borders of Tyre, and Sidon, Jesus's next journey, was, through the country of Decapolis, to the lake of Tiberias.

32. As the multitude gathered round him, a man deaf and dumb was brought to him to be restored. 33. Jesus, taking him a little aside, touched his ears, and mouth; and looking up to heaven, 34. cried out *Ephphatha, Be opened*; on which an instant cure was effected. 35. 36. Jesus bringing the man to the people, forbade them to publish the matter abroad.—This prohibition however, was but ill-observed: for they were above measure astonished; and seemed more struck with this miracle, than with any they had yet seen.

C H A P.
VIII.

1. 2. 3.

The multitude having now been with Jesus three days; and having spent all their provision, he called his disciples to him, and told

27. See Matthew xv. 26.

33. The text says, *He spit, and touched his tongue*. This action is mentioned in two other places, Mark viii. 23; and John ix. 6. It has to us an indelicate appearance: but we must not criticise the manners, which prevailed two thousand years ago, by those of our own age. Our Saviour often used some *outward sign*; why *this* was chosen, it is impossible for us to know.

36. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

2. These three days, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, might be only two nights, and one day. Nor need we suppose, that all the multitude staid even that time; but were continually

told them he was unwilling to send the people away fasting, as many of them came from a great distance; and might suffer through hunger. The disciples not considering the miracle he had so lately wrought, immediately mentioned again the difficulty of feeding such a number in so desolate a place. But Jesus finding they had seven loaves, and a few small fishes, ordered the people to sit down; and giving thanks, he distributed the provision among them. After they were all satisfied, tho they consisted of at least four thousand, as much offal remained, as filled seven baskets.

Jesus then dismissing them, took boat, and landed on the coast of Dalmanutha.

At this place a body of Pharisees, came to him; and expressing themselves dissatisfied with the miracles he had yet wrought, which shewed his power only over *earthly things*; demanded the evidence of a *sign from heaven*.

Jesus grieved at their obstinacy and malice, refused to gratify their curiosity; and leaving them, took boat again, and repassed the lake.

It happened, that the disciples having forgotten to take with them a sufficient supply of bread, were communicating the neglect to each other; when Jesus bad them beware of *the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Herodians*.

Struck with the word *leaven*, they immediately conceived, that Jesus, (who had in fact admonished them against Pharisaical doctrines) had reproved their neglect in not taking bread. He rebuked their worldly-mindedness therefore, and bad them consider the two great

nually coming and going; yet still, as many of them came from far, and had nothing to eat, they were objects of compassion.

miracles, he had lately wrought to supply the necessities of so many thousand people.

22. The boat landed them at Bethsaida, where a blind man was
 23. soon after brought to them. Jesus taking him a little out of the
 town, and touching his own tongue with the end of his finger, laid
 24. it on the man's eye. An imperfect vision was at first produced;
 25. but on a second touch, the man was perfectly restored. Jesus
 26. then sending him home, forbade him to return to the town; or
 publish what he had done.

27. From Bethsaida Jesus travelled through the towns in the neigh-
 bourhood of Cesarea Philippi: and on the road, asked his disciples
 28. the opinion of people in general about him? The disciples an-
 29. swered, that some said he was John the Baptist—some Elias—
 and others, one of the prophets. But, said Jesus, Whom do you
 suppose me to be? Peter, with great warmth, answered, He be-
 30. lieved him to be the Messiah. Jesus however, for his own private
 reasons, ordered them at present to keep that truth to themselves.

31. 32. On this occasion, for the first time, he began to prepare his
 disciples for the great event, which was now approaching. I must
 suffer, said he, many things: my doctrine, and offers of salvation
 shall be rejected by the Jewish rulers; and in the end I shall be
 put to death: but, on the third day, be assured, I will rise again.

23. See a note on Mark vii. 33.

26. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

26. The peculiar secrecy which attended this miracle, Dr. Clark, and others, ascribe to *Jesus's knowing the impenitence, and unworthiness of the people of Bethsaida.* But unless the motives of our Saviour's actions, at least when there is any harshness in them, are very plain, I think, it is as well to be silent about them. We know he often did work miracles before *unworthy people*; and even at Bethsaida in particular, he did *many mighty works*. Matt. xi. 21. We may well suppose, that many of our Saviour's motives may be hid from us.

30. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

Peter having no conception of these things; and having his mind wholly occupied with worldly considerations, expressed in vehement language, his disappointment.

Jesus rebuked him with more than his usual severity on this occasion, as a person, who opposed the great dispensations of God. 33.

Having thus spoken more plainly to his *disciples*, than he had ever done before; he spoke also more plainly to the *people*. He took an occasion to tell them, that his followers must not expect their happiness from the pleasures, and advantages of this life: but must pursue his steps through self-denials, and afflictions; and must consider their true loss and gain, not as they are connected with this world; but as they are connected with the next. For what would it profit a man, said he, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Let not therefore the reproaches, the contempt, or the example of bad men, deter you from the belief, and practice of your religion: but look forward to that time, when you may with confidence meet the son of man in all his glory. Even before this generation shall pass away, you shall see evident signs of the power of the Messiah's kingdom. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38.

CHAP.
IX.
1.

Jesus having thus given his disciples a distant view both of his sufferings, and glory, thought it proper to awaken their hopes still more forcibly by a visible representation. Taking with him therefore Peter, James, and John, he ascended a lofty mountain; and was transfigured before them. In the midst of a resplendent light, his whole person assumed a dazzling lustre; and he appeared supported, on his right, and left, by the two great prophets of the law, Moses and Elias, both in the same luminous form, who seemed in earnest conversation with him. 2. 3. 4.

The disciples, transported with a variety of passions, wonder, joy, and fear, knew not where they were. Peter in a sort of extatic agitation, 5. 6.

agitation, wished to fix this glorious scene. Let us build, said he, three tabernacles—one for You—another for Moses—and a third for Elias.

7. While he spake, a cloud spread over the illumination; and a voice issued from it, This is my beloved son, hear him.

8. The cloud instantly dispersing, the vision was gone; and Jesus was left alone, standing with the three disciples, as before.

9. As they descended the mountain, Jesus enjoined them to say
10. nothing of what they had seen, till after his resurrection. This injunction they determined to observe; but at the same time, could not conceive what he meant by his resurrection. They had
11. other scruples also. As the Scribes said, that Elias must precede the Messiah; why should they not convince them, by telling them (what had just now happened) that Elias was already come?

12. Jesus told them, that it was indeed predicted, that Elias should precede the Messiah; and prepare all things for his reception; and
13. that afterwards the Messiah himself should suffer death. But that, in fact, the predicted Elias had already appeared; and had already suffered.—They easily perceived, that Jesus spake of John the baptist; who was to *appear in the spirit, and power of Elias*.

14. When Jesus arrived near the bottom of the mountain, he saw a great croud assembled about his disciples; and some Scribes
15. earnestly engaged in conference with them. But when he appeared, he immediately drew the respect, and attention of the whole assembly, which they discovered by great emotions of joy.

9. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

11. This sense, which is adopted by some commentators, is, I think, the best.

15. The original says, *they were greatly amazed*; which some interpreters suppose was owing to the shining appearance of his face, like that of Moses, when *he* came down from the mountain. But I think this, refinement.

Jesus turning to the Scribes, asked them, On what they were questioning his disciples? 16.

Upon this, a person from the croud told him, they were questioning them about a son of his, who lay under the misfortune of a very grievous possession. I brought him here, said he, with an expectation of finding you: and in your absence, I have applied to your disciples: but they cannot relieve him. 17. 18.

Then Jesus rebuking his disciples for their want of faith, ordered the young man to be brought to him; and asked his father (as he brought him forward, in the agony of a violent convulsion) how long he had suffered under that great calamity? 19. 20. 21. 22.

From his childhood, answered the father; and sometimes he is even much worse, than you now see him; and is in frequent hazard from fire, or water, or any thing else he comes near, that is dangerous.—But if you have power to heal him, have compassion on our distress.

Do you believe that I am able, said Jesus? No man ever trusted in God, without meeting his reward. 23.

Lord, I believe, said the unhappy parent, with a burst of tears: help my infirmity, if there be any deficiency in my faith. 24.

Jesus then seeing the croud closing together from every part, rebuked the evil spirit with authority; and ordered it to leave the young man, and enter no more into him. On this, he was seized with a convulsion, and terribly agitated through his whole frame; till nature being quite spent, he sank down totally inanimate: insomuch that many thought him dead. But Jesus taking him by the hand, raised him up perfectly restored. 25. 26. 27.

After this, Jesus retiring from the multitude into a house, his disciples privately asked him, Why they were unequal to the work, which he had just performed? Merely, said Jesus, through the want 28.

want of those purified affections, and that ardent faith, which alone can work such miracles as these.

30. Soon after this, Jesus determining to go to Jerusalem, passed through Galilee; wishing to go as privately, and meet with as little interruption, as possible.

31. In the way he reminded his disciples of what he had before told them—that he should be delivered into the hands of his enemies, who would put him to death; but on the third day he should rise from the dead.—What he said however made little impression upon them; except to raise in their hearts some ambitious views: for they had no clear idea of the Messiah's kingdom; and were afraid to ask for explanations.

32. Jesus left them to themselves during the journey; but when he arrived at Capernaum, he called them to him, and asked them, 34. What they had been disputing about on the road? But they were silent: for, in fact, they had been disputing, which of them should be the greatest?

35. Jesus knowing their thoughts, told them, that the only way, in which any man could be the greatest in his kingdom, was to consider himself as the least.

36. 37. He then took a child; and holding it in his arms, That person, said he, who wishes to be a member of my kingdom, must bring down his pride, his ambition, and all his worldly passions to such innocence, as this. Nothing else will qualify him for it.

38. Here John, taking occasion from what his master had just said, told Jesus, they had seen a person endeavouring to cast out devils in his name; but as he had not professed himself a disciple, they had forbidden him.

38. See a note on Matt. xii. 27.

But Jesus disapproved their conduct. No man, said he, can attempt to work a miracle in my name; who hath any enmity to my doctrine: and I wish to consider every one as for me, who is not openly against me. 39. 40.

Jesus then resuming his discourse, told them that a regard, or disregard to his doctrines should be the great test of the sincerity of mankind, wherever the gospel should be preached. The gospel, said he, no doubt, will bring its difficulties on men; and often interfere with the dearest of their worldly interests: but if they are true believers, and wish to avoid the guilt, and punishment of apostasy, they must persevere. As the sacrifice is purified by salt; so is the professor of the gospel by his trials. The great truths you receive, are in themselves good: be you properly prepared to dispense them.—And that I may draw my discourse to what gave occasion to it, lay aside all jealousies, and contentions about worldly matters, and live in perfect harmony with each other; as the only way receive the benefit of that gospel, which you teach. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50.

C H A P.

X.

1.

Having passed through Galilee, Jesus entered Judea; where many people met him; whom, as usual, he instructed.

Among them were mixed several of the Pharisees, who with a view to take advantage of what should pass in his discourse, asked him, Whether it were lawful for a man to put away his wife?—The 2.

44. 46. 48. In these verses St. Mark uses several times the phrase, *where their worm dieth not; and their fire is not quenched*; which Dr. Rymer (Rev. rel. p. 155) ingeniously supposes alludes to the two customs of *burying*, and *burning* dead bodies. In one the *worm*; in the other, the *fire* consumes: but hereafter neither *worm*, nor *fire* shall destroy.

50. There is great difficulty in this verse. The word *salt* seems to be taken in two different senses.—Bp. Pearce is of opinion, that *και πασα θυσια αλι αλιθνησεται* (in the former verse) is an interpolation. (See his comment.) But in that verse, I think, the difficulty vanishes, if we translate *και* as *ως*, which is not unusual. The sense would then be, “Every Christian is salted with his trials, *as* the legal sacrifice, &c.” But still there remains the difficulty of the 50th verse, which is the verse I should rather wish to consider as an interpolation.

R

difficulty

difficulty lay in obliging him either, on one hand, to oppose what was generally thought allowed by the law; or on the other, to contradict what they had often heard was his own doctrine.

3. Jesus, aware of their malice, asked them, What the law of Moses enjoined on that head?

4. It enjoined only (they answered) that the husband should give the wife a bill of divorce.

5. Jesus replied, it was true: but added, that Moses, in that matter, had been induced merely by the necessity of complying with a hardened people. You will recollect, said he, a law still more
6. 7. 8. ancient than that of Moses, which enjoins, in consequence of God's *having made them male, and female, that a man shall leave his father, and mother, and cleave unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.*
9. What God therefore hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

10. 11. 12. Jesus having thus silenced the Pharisees, retired into a house; where his disciples desired him to speak more plainly on the subject of marriage. He told them, that his institution founded this matter on the original law of God, and totally forbade a dissolution of marriage, except merely in the case of adultery; and esteemed both the man, and the woman, adulterers on a second marriage, during the life of either party.

13. While Jesus continued in the house with his disciples, some people in the neighbourhood brought their children to him, desiring, according to a common custom among the Jews, that he would lay his hands upon them, and bless them. The disciples rather thinking this a troublesome intrusion, checked their forwardness.

11. See Matt. xix. 9.

12. A woman was not permitted to put away her husband by the Mosaic law: but it was often practised about the time of our Saviour; of which Josephus gives several instances. The celebrated case of Herodias was one, who left her husband Herod Philip; and was married to Herod Antipas.

But Jesus rebuking his disciples, bad them suffer the little children 14. 15.
to come unto him; for their innocence, and simplicity of manners,
were the true emblems of those virtues, which must adorn every
one, who wished to be a member of his kingdom. He then took 16.
them into his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Jesus, after this, continuing his journey towards Jerusalem, was 17.
met by a person of some distinction; who addressing him by the
name of *good master*, desired to know, by what means he might
obtain everlasting life?

Jesus observing from the manner of his address, that he ac- 18.
knowledged his divine pretensions, thought proper to put him to
a trial. He asked him first, How he had fulfilled his duty to his 19.
neighbour? Whether he had the breach of any commandment
on his conscience? The enquirer answering with great readiness 20.
on these heads, Jesus expressed his satisfaction so far. But, said 21.
he, let me ask you one thing more: Have you faith enough in me
(as you seem to acknowledge me to be the Messiah) to sell,
and give away all you have in this world; and trust in me for
that everlasting life you are in quest of?

This was a harder trial, than the young man was prepared for. 22.
He was very rich; and being thoroughly disappointed at finding how
great a sacrifice he was to make, retired abruptly, without any reply.

How almost impossible is it, said Jesus, turning to his disciples, 23.
for a rich man to become a sincere christian.

The disciples expressing their surprize at what he said, he ex- 24. 25.
plained himself by adding, that the difficulty arose, not so properly
from their having riches, as from their trusting in them—from
their being so attached to them, as this person was; who when
called on by his religion, could not give them up. It was impossible,

18. See a note on Matt. xix. 18.

he said, for any person, under the influence of such a disposition, to be a member of his kingdom.

26. 27. The disciples still expressing their uneasiness with regard to the condition of rich men, Jesus explained himself farther, by observing, that he spoke of mere men, unsupported by the grace of God; but that all, who endeavoured to please God, whether rich, or poor, should feel themselves more and more strengthened by his gracious assistance.

28. Peter encouraged by what his master had said; in the fullness of his heart, cried out, that they had left all, and followed him.

29. 30. To this Jesus made no particular reply, but in general said, that no man gave up his worldly connections, and advantages for the sake of the gospel, who should not find his self-denials, and persecutions (if he met with them) well repaid with a tranquil mind, a good conscience, a heavenly communication, and a sufficiency of all things, even in this world; while in the world to come he might be assured of everlasting happiness.—But many, he added, who ought to put in the first claim to these heavenly advantages, will be found among the last; while they, from whom less could be expected, will stand among the first.

32. 33. 34. Jesus by this time approached Jerusalem; and his disciples fearing, from what he had frequently said, that some great event, tho they knew not what, was about to take place; began to be apprehensive, and uneasy. Jesus perceiving their distress, called them to him; and mentioning again those sufferings, which he was now about to undergo at Jerusalem; repeated the assurance he had given

31. Our Saviour seems chiefly to have had the Jews, and Gentiles in his eye; the former of whom rejected the gospel, tho it might have been expected, they would have been the first to receive it: while the latter, from whom little could be expected, should receive it with great gladness.

them, that, after these sufferings were over, on the third day, he should rise again from the dead.

This assurance, tho they knew not well the meaning of what 35. 36. 37.
their master had said, began however to raise their hopes; but at the same time it raised their ambition. They conceived his rising from the dead under some idea of temporal power; and two of them, James, and John, who had often been distinguished by their master, thought they had a good pretence at this time, to put in a claim for superior honours.

Jesus gently rebuking them, told them, they knew not what 38. 39. 40.
they asked—that the passage to his kingdom led not through places of distinguished honours; but through sufferings, and death—and that altho they might, and he knew they should, pursue his painful steps; yet still the degrees of pre-eminence in heaven were not disposed of, like honours upon earth, by favour, and partiality; but were reserved for those, who by their piety, and perseverance, should make themselves most worthy of them.

In the mean time, this forwardness in the two sons of Zebedee 41.
raised the jealousy of the other ten disciples; and gave Jesus a new opportunity of instructing them. It must not, said he, be among 42. 43. 44.
you; as it is among the contenders for earthly honours. They strive ambitiously for superior power, and authority. Your strife must be of a different kind. He, among you, who wishes to be the greatest, must make himself the least; and consider humility as the principal qualification in obtaining superiority in my kingdom. You cannot surely expect more worldly authority, than your 45.
master aspires after; who makes himself the servant of all; and lays down even his life as a ransom for the world.

Jesus, by this time, had arrived at Jericho: and as he left that 46.
town, being attended by a great multitude of people, a blind man, of the name of Bartimeus, who sat begging by the road side, hear-
ing

47. ing that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, called out to him by
 48. the title of the Messiah; and intreated his mercy.—The people
 49. 50. 51. displeased at such importunity, endeavoured to repress it. But Jesus
 52. coming to the place, ordered the man to be brought to him; and
 asked him, What benefit he particularly desired? The man answered, with strong expressions of faith, that he might recover his sight. Jesus told him, his faith had made him an object of mercy; and immediately restored him: on which the man joined the multitude, and followed Jesus.

C H A P.
 XI.

1. 2. 3. 4.
 5. 6. 7.

Soon after, Jesus arrived at Bethphage, and Bethany, villages at the foot of the mount of Olives, very near Jerusalem; and intending now to enter that city in a public manner, he sent two of his disciples to one of the neighbouring towns; and describing in what circumstances they should find an ass's colt, he ordered them to bring it to him; telling them what they should say to the owner of it, if any questions should be asked. Accordingly they brought it without difficulty; and throwing their garments over it, they
 8. 9. 10. set Jesus thereon. The multitude, in the mean time, shewing all the demonstrations of joy, which were usual on the most solemn occasions; spreading flowers, and even their garments in the way, preceded, and followed him, crying, Hosannah to the son of David: Blessed is he, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosannah in the highest!

11. In this triumphant manner Jesus entered Jerusalem; and going into the temple examined every thing; and in the evening retired with his disciples to Bethany.

1. See an account of the situation of these places in a note on Matt. xxiv. 3.

8. See a note on Matt. xxi. 8.

10. See the parallel passage in Matt. xxi. 9.

The next morning, as he returned to Jerusalem, he was hungry; and observing a fig-tree, he came up to it, expecting fruit; but found only leaves. He made it therefore an example to his disciples of the unprofitableness of a dead faith. 12. 13.

On entering Jerusalem, he went immediately into the temple; and finding the courts of the gentiles, where profelytes used to worship, full of people trading with their goods, under the pretence of furnishing animals for the temple-sacrifices, he drove them all out with authority; and would not suffer any burthens to be carried through the courts; quoting that passage of Isaiah; *The sons of the strangers, that join themselves to the Lord, will I bring to my holy mountain; and make them joyful in my house of prayer. For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.* 15. 16. 17.

These things, it may easily be supposed, gave great offence to the chief priests: but they durst only plot in private against Jesus; being afraid of taking any public measures, lest they should alarm the people, who had a high veneration for him. 18.

In the evening, Jesus retired again to Bethany; and the next morning returned, as before, with his disciples to Jerusalem. As they went past the fig-tree, Peter observed, that it was withered to the roots: on which Jesus took occasion to impress on them the necessity 19. 20. 21. 22.

13. The deists find here great matter of ridicule. The text tells us, say they, *the time of figs was not yet*. How then, could Jesus possibly expect fruit, at a season, when there *could* be none? But the words *καιρος συκων* here probably signifies, not the time, when figs *were* ripe; but the time when they *were* gathered; which was not, till the sheaf of the first-fruits had been waved before the Lord. The sense of the passage therefore runs thus; “And seeing a fig-tree he came to it, expecting to find fruit on it, as he well might, because the time of gathering fruit was not yet come.”—They who are not satisfied with this explication, may see a long criticism on the subject in *Bowyer's conjectures*.

17. Isa. lvi. 7.

22. The barren fig-tree is sometimes considered as an emblem of the rejection of the Jews: but as it seems to have been held out only to *the disciples*, I prefer the interpretation I have given.

23. of a strong exertion of faith. There is no miracle, said he, beyond
 24. its power to effect. If steady faith accompany your prayers, you may
 25. be assured of receiving what you pray for; only still you will remember, that a forgiving disposition must be united to your prayers. Nothing else can carry them to the throne of God.

27. 28. By this time, they had entered Jerusalem; and Jesus going into the temple, began again his customary employment of teaching the people.

The chief priests, and scribes, in the mean time, had taken new courage; and coming to Jesus, demanded, by what authority he did these things? alluding particularly to the violence he had shewn, the day before, in the courts of the temple.

29. 30. Jesus knowing their malice, told them, that before he answered their question, he must ask another. Was John's mission, said he, of *divine*, or of *human* origin?—This *question* was in fact, an *answer*; for whatever John's authority was, such also was that of Jesus.

31. 32. The chief priests easily saw the difficulty. *Human* they durst not call it; because every body believed John to be a prophet: and if they should say, it was *divine*, the reply was obvious; Why then did you
 33. not believe him? They were obliged therefore to tell Jesus, they could not resolve his question. Neither then, said Jesus, shall I resolve yours.

C H A P.
XII.

1.

Jesus having thus silenced the chief priests, continued the subject, by setting before them, in the audience of the people, their hardened, impenitent, and dangerous state—the ungrateful returns, which the Jewish nation had made to God, for all his calls of mercy—and

23. This promise of our Saviour to his disciples, I apprehend, relates chiefly to the enabling of them to perform miracles; yet in a degree it may be applicable to all Christians, as affording them assistance in the midst of difficulties, and distresses, which may appear like removing mountains.

1. See a note on Matt. xxi. 33.

finally God's intention of casting them off; and adopting the gentiles in their room.

A person, said he, planted a vineyard; and having furnished it with every thing necessary, left it in the hands of labourers, and took a journey. At the proper season, he sent a servant to the labourers for the fruits of it. But they paid no regard to the message; and even ill-treated the messenger. Others, sent on the same errand, they used with the same indignity; and even put some of them to death. At last, the master of the vineyard sent his only son; not doubting, but that to him they would pay a proper respect. But it happened otherwise. These wicked labourers, lost to all sense of goodness, put even the son himself to death; concluding, that now they should divide the vineyard among themselves. What therefore, continued Jesus, shall the Lord of the vineyard do to those wicked labourers? He will come with power; and destroying them, give his vineyard to others. Have you never read, said he, that *the stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner; and that this is the Lord's doing; and shall be marvellous in our eyes*†? 2. 3. 4. 5. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.

To this strong reproof the chief priests were unable to reply. They perceived plainly, that the parable was pointed at them; and were stung with malice: but not daring to shew it openly, through a fear of the people, they retired a second time to plot in private. 12.

Their next endeavour was to insnare him, and draw matter of conviction from his own mouth. With this view they sent some of the Pharisees, and Herodians to him; who pretending great reverence towards him, and as if wishing to satisfy their consciences by his decision, desired to have his opinion on the great national question, Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar? His answer, whether in the negative, or affirmative, must of course offend either 13. 14.

† Pf. cxviii. 22. 23.

15. the Romans, or the Jews.—Jesus knowing their design, avoided
 16. the snare by desiring to see the tribute-money. Whose image,
 said he, and inscription, does this coin bear?—They answered
 17. Cæsar's. Give then to Cæsar, said he, the things that are Cæsar's;
 and to God, the things that are God's.—The Pharisees, and He-
 rodians finding themselves totally unequal to his wisdom, were
 astonished, and retired.

18. A body of Sadducees came to him next. They did not believe
 a future state; and brought a question to him, which on a sup-
 position there was one, appeared to them of uncommon difficulty.—
 19. 20. 21. Master, said they, Moses commanded, that if a man die without
 22. 23. 24. children, his brother shall take his wife, and raise a family to pre-
 serve his brother's name. Now we have an instance of seven bre-
 thren, who, successively, married the same woman; we should
 be glad to know therefore, if there be a resurrection, which of
 them shall hereafter be the woman's husband?

25. In this question, replied Jesus, you shew your ignorance both
 of the *power of God*; and of the *truth of scripture*: For in the first
 place, the state of the next world is not accommodated to the
 condition of this: marriage, which is necessary here, will be unne-
 cessary there.

26. Then again, with regard to your main question, if you believe
 the scriptures, you must also believe the resurrection of the dead.
 For in scripture God calls himself the God of Abraham, and the
 27. God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Do you not then see the
 absurdity of supposing, that God should stile himself the God of
 persons, who were not really in a state of existence?

This answer silenced the Sadducees. But one of the Scribes, 28.
who had heard what passed; and perceiving the propriety, with
which Jesus had answered them, asked him, Which was the prin-
cipal part of the law ?

Jesus referred him to the moral part—his duty to God, and 29. 30. 31.
his neighbour; and placed the sum of religion in the observance,
and subordination, of these great points.

To this the scribe assented; declaring, that in his opinion, God 32. 33.
respected the performance of those duties greatly beyond sacrifice,
or any other religious ceremony.

Jesus, pleased with his answer, told him, he was not far from 34. 35. 36.
having a just idea of those doctrines, and of that holy kingdom, 37.
which the gospel meant to establish.

While the Scribes still continued in the temple, Jesus asked them,
in what way they explained that passage of David, *The Lord said
unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies*

28. There seems to be a difference here, between the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark. St. Matthew. (xxii. 35.) says, the Scribe came (*μεταξω*) with an *insidious intention*, and evidently introduces him under this idea. *When the Pharisees had heard, that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, &c.* St. Mark's account has manifestly a different tendency. Some expositors, Dr. Clark in particular, reconcile the two accounts by supposing, he came at first *μεταξω*; and afterwards became convinced. But this does not intirely reconcile them; for St. Mark says, the Scribe had been attending to the discourse of Jesus, and perceived that *he had answered well*.—Besides, I do not see how a question of this kind was calculated for any *insidious purpose*.

But perhaps the Scribe's behaviour, (who probably acted with great caution) might have struck St. Matthew in one way; and the apostle, whoever he was, who instructed St. Mark, in another. The great point, which was intended to be shewn, was the preference, which Jesus gave to the moral law above the ceremonial: and to this point both the evangelists attended; paying little regard perhaps to other circumstances.

29. Our Saviour's answer to the Scribe is interpreted by Dr. Clark, as adverting to the difference between the *moral* and *ceremonial* law; which, I think, appears most agreeable to the context.

thy footstool. This you all acknowledge, said he, to be spoken of the Messiah; and yet you see, David calls him *his Lord*. How then do you reconcile this with his being David's son?

To this no answer was given. And indeed from this time, none either of the chief priests, the Scribes, or the Pharisees, ever ventured to put a question to him again: while the common people seemed evidently to rejoice in the great superiority, which he had acquired.

38. 39. 40. Jesus then turning to the people, dismissed them with a caution against the hypocrisy of the Scribes. They affect every thing, said he, that is grave, solemn, and sanctified; they claim to themselves superiority; and as an atonement for their oppressions, make long prayers. Few sinners have more guilt in the eyes of God.

41. As Jesus, after these discourses, was leaving the temple, he observed the people throwing their offerings into the treasury; and
42. many, who were rich, giving largely. Among others, he observed a poor widow, who came, and threw in two mites, which together make only a farthing. Jesus thought this a proper opportunity
43. 44. to instruct his disciples in the nature of alms-giving. This poor widow, said he, hath thrown into the treasury a gift more acceptable to God, than any of those you have just seen offered: for God measures the charitable action, not by the largeness of the gift, but by the motive of the giver.

41. There were chests placed in the courts of the temple, in which people put their voluntary contributions, for furnishing bullocks, sheep, wood, salt, and other things necessary for sacrifices.

44. This sentiment, tho not *expressed*, in the text, is certainly *implied*. Our Saviour says, *she gave more*. More in *reality* she certainly did not give. It must therefore be *more* from *some accompaniment*.

As they left the temple, one of the disciples examining it with particular attention, desired his master to observe the size of the stones, and splendor of the whole building.

1.

Jesus told him, that, vast, and splendid as it was, in a little time, not one stone should be left upon another.

2.

Nothing more was said on the subject at that time; but as they retired in the evening, and sat down on the side of the mount of Olives, in direct view of the temple, some of the disciples asked Jesus, When this great revolution, of which he spoke, should happen? and what signs should precede it?

3.

4.

One of the first signs, said he, shall be the appearance of impostors, under the title of prophets, and Messiahs, who shall make great pretences to deliver the Jews; and shall deceive *many*. You I have warned against them.

5. 6.

You will next hear of commotions, wars, famines, and other distresses. These things will bring on apace the approaching destruction.

7. 8.

In the mean time, you must expect persecution. You must be brought, to answer for the truth, before the great men, and kings of the earth. Thus you shall be the happy means of introducing the gospel among the gentiles.

9.

10.

In these circumstances be not afraid; nor meditate for answers. You shall then be under the direction of an all-powerful assistance. Only be prepared for the worst in this world: for the religion you preach is so contrary to the views, and passions, and prejudices of men, that their malice, and opposition to it will overpower every natural affection. Keep the eye of faith therefore steadily fixed on the great end of all your labours, and sufferings.

11.

12. 13.

1. Josephus speaks of the stones, of which the temple was built, as of an amazing size. Some of them, he says, were sixty feet in length.

14. 15. 16.
17. 18.

The last sign of this great destruction, shall be the approach of the Roman army ; which the prophet Daniel calls, *the abomination of desolation* ; alluding to the heathen armies surrounding the holy temple of God. When this sign comes on, be assured, the destruction I have predicted, is at hand. Then let all, who believe this prophecy, escape from a guilty city : let them pray to God to remove all obstructions ; and assist their flight : for among all the calamities, that ever happened to mankind, or ever shall happen, nothing ever was, or shall be, greater than this. And unless God, in his regard for his chosen servants, shall shorten those days of distress, the whole Jewish nation must inevitably perish.

19.

20.

21. 22. 23.

In the midst of these calamities, impostors shall still arise, and persuade people to acts of sedition, through the hopes of deliverance. But I have forewarned you not to be seduced by any of these pretences.

24. 25.

26. 27.

Such are the signs, which shall precede the destruction of Jerusalem. From this time the Jewish government shall totally cease ; and the whole Jewish nation shall hence forwards become a standing proof of the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. The ministers of Christ shall be sent out to draw those into one fold, from every part of the world, who believe in the gospel.

19. Whoever reads the account, which Josephus gives of the siege of Jerusalem—the ferocity of the enemy without—the famine within—and, above all, the rage, and cruelty of contending factions in the midst of all this scene of horror ; will be inclined to think these words of our Saviour, tho in some degree hyperbolical, do not greatly exceed the misery they describe.

22. *Shall rise, and shew* ; might be translated, *shall rise, and make ostentation of* : they shall not really perform ; but pretend to perform.

25. The heavenly bodies are usual figures in the Jewish language to describe earthly potestates. Isaiah is frequent in the use of them. Nay instances might be brought from the Talmud, in which these lofty figures are used to describe the ruin even of private families.

As

As surely therefore as you know the approach of summer by 28.
 the budding of the tree ; so surely may you know the approach of 29.
 these calamities by the signs I have given you. Even before the 30.
 present generation end, this great event shall take place. Heaven 31.
 and earth shall be dissolved, and pass away : but the great truths,
 which I have set before you, be assured, shall be completely
 fulfilled.

That great event, the destruction of Jerusalem, is a sign, or 32. 33.
 type of that still greater event, the dissolution of heaven and earth,
 and the final consummation of all things.—The time indeed of
this latter event God only knows ; but your ignorance of the
 time should be a great argument for constant preparation. I am
 about to leave you. As a master taking a journey, leaves his 34.
 house, and goods under the care of his servants, whom he exhorts
 to be circumspect, and attentive ; so I exhort you to be those 35. 36.
 faithful servants, that at whatever time your master call, at an early
 hour, or a late one, you may be well prepared to receive him.—
 Nor is this great preparation a doctrine intended for your use 37.
 alone ; but must be strongly inculcated on all, who desire to be my
 disciples.

CHAP.
 XIV.
 1. 2.

While Jesus held these divine discourses with his disciples, the
 chief priests, and Scribes had been consulting how to destroy him :
 but as he was so much revered by the people, they had laid

32. Our Saviour mixes together the two great ideas of the destruction of the Jewish nation,
 and the end of the world. The two ideas are very distinguishable ; tho the blending of their
 colours is not easily separated, either here or in St. Matthew : but here the relation is more
 concise, and therefore more difficult. It is not indeed expressed in the text that the destruction
 of Jerusalem was a type of the consummation of all things : but this seems to be the idea.

33. Here another idea, that of death, is introduced ; which is to each individual the same
 as the general consummation of all things.

afide

afide all thoughts of feizing him at the paffover, when fuch multitudes were affembled.

3. From the open part of the mount of Olives, where Jefus had been fitting with his difciples, he retired, as ufual, to Bethany; where at the houfe of Simon the leper, the following circumftance happened. As he fat at meat, a woman brought a box of very precious ointment, which, in great refpect, ſhe poured upon his head. Some at the table, taking offence at this, as a waſte of what might have been fold for a confiderable ſum, and given to the poor, found fault with the woman. But Jefus answered;
4. 5. Cenfure her not; her zeal is highly praife-worthy. The poor you have always with you, as the objects of your charity. This is an extraordinary occaſion. She hath ſhewn her regard for me by anointing my body for its burial; and wherever the goſpel ſhall be preached, this act, unworthy as you may eſteem it, ſhall be recorded to her praife.
6. 7. 8. 9.

10. It was at this time that Judas firſt meditated the deſign of betraying his maſter. With this purpoſe he went to the chief prieſts; and offered, for a proper reward, to conduct their officers, where they might ſeize him with the greateſt privacy.

3. Συρρίψασα, ſhe brake the box. This ſhould not be applied to the box, but to *ſhaking*, or *breaking*, the ointment; which ſeparates the parts, and diffuſes the fragrance more ſtrongly.

————— Fracta magis redolere videntur

Omnia, quod contrita—————

Anointing with perfumes was common at the feaſts of the ancients.

Ciboria exple: funde capicibus

Unguenta de conchis—————

Hor. car. II. 7.

It was common alſo to uſe boxes made of alabaſter, as well as ſhells. *Hunc aliqui lapidem alabaſtrem vocant, quem cavant ad vaſa unguentaria, quoniam optime ſervare incorrupta dicitur.*

Plin. de Marmor.

10. See a note on Matt. xxvj. 14.

This

This offer was received with joy. An agreement was made; and thirty pieces of silver were given; for which Judas engaged to bring them the earliest intelligence of Jesus's retirement. 11.

In the mean time the passover approached; and Jesus having yet made no preparations for it, the disciples mentioned it to him: on which he ordered two of them to go into the city, where they should find a man in such circumstances, as he described, entering a house. This person they were instructed to follow, and to ask for a chamber, where they might eat the passover. All this was done, and an upper-room, well-furnished, was shewn them, where proper preparation was made. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

Jesus, soon after, came with the twelve: and as they sat at meat, he told them plainly, that one of them should betray him. This threw the whole table into great anxiety; each being solicitous to know whom he meant. 17. 18. 19.

It is one, said Jesus, who now eateth with me. It is necessary for the salvation of the world, that the son of man should die, as the prophets have foretold: but that is no excuse for him, by whom he is betrayed. Wretched is the state of that guilty person. 20. 21.

After supper, Jesus took bread, and giving thanks, brake it, and gave it among his disciples, saying, Eat this, in a solemn manner, in remembrance of my body, which is given for you. Then taking the cup, he presented it also to them, saying, Drink this likewise, in remembrance of my blood, which is shed for you. From henceforward, let the passover cease; and let this ceremony be established in it's room, among all christians. 22. 23. 24. 25.

16. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 19.

21. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 25.

25. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 29.

26. After the celebration of this rite, they sang a hymn; and Jesus retired with them, as usual, towards the mount of Olives.

27. That severe time of trial, (said he to them, as they walked) of which I have so often warned you, is now at hand—that time, of which the prophet speaks, *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*.—Be not however discouraged: after I am risen from the dead, I will meet you again in Galilee.

29. Peter, with great vehemence, answered his master by declaring, that whoever should be offended, he certainly never should. Jesus bad him not be so forward in his zeal; assuring him that, that very night, before the cock should crow twice, he should deny him thrice. Peter with still greater confidence replied, he might die with him; but to deny him was impossible; in which language they all united.

32. 33. By this time they were come to a part of the mount of Olives, called Gethsemane, from the oil-presses, which stood there.

34. Here Jesus leaving all his disciples, except Peter, James, and John, went with these three a little farther; and fell into an agony. My soul, said he, is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: wait here a while, and watch with me.

35. He then went forward a few paces, and falling on the ground, he prayed, that if it were possible, that hour might pass from him. All things, O my Father, said he, are possible with thee—take this cup from me—Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

37. Then returning to his disciples, and finding them heavy with sleep, he rebuked them for their great unconcern in an hour of such distress.

26. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 30.

27. See Zech. xiii. 7.

Watch, said he, and pray for God's assistance in this time of trial. 38.
The spirit truly is ready; but the flesh is weak.

Having said this, he went a second time, and prayed in the same 39. 40.
manner. When he came back he found them again heavy, and
confused.

Returning a third time, he told them,—his agony was now past 41. 42.
—and other trials should immediately come on. Arise, said he;
the great event is at hand.

He had scarce spoken, when a number of armed men appeared 43. 44. 45.
with Judas at their head; who went up to Jesus, and saluted him.
The officers, and servants of the chief priests on this immediately
seized him.

This violence at first raised the opposition of the disciples; and 46. 47.
one of them drawing a sword, wounded a servant of the high-priest.
Jesus in the mean time, expostulated with them for this secret, and 48.
insidious manner of taking him; telling them, they had frequent 49.
opportunities of seizing him openly in the temple, if they had any
legal charge against him.—But the scriptures, added he, must
be fulfilled.

The disciples, seeing now, that all was over, provided for their 50.
own safety by flight. One young man among them the servants 51. 52.
seized: but he leaving his garment in their hands, escaped.

From the mount of Olives Jesus was immediately carried before 53.
the high-priest; with whom were assembled, tho it was now late,
the principal of the Jewish Sanhedrim.

52. People in warm countries, used often to wear no other dress than a simple piece of cloth. Hanging one corner of it before, over the left shoulder, they brought it behind, and so circling the body, threw it again over the left shoulder, the lappet hanging behind.—Or, the sense need not require that he fled from them literally *naked*; but only without his *upper garment*.

54. Among the croud of officers, and servants, Peter, who had followed at a distance, now mixed himself; and entering the palace, sat down with others at the fire.

55. The chief-priests, who were determined at any rate to put Jesus to death, wished however to have as much as possible the appearance of justice on their side; and with this view they had prepared
56. what evidence they could: but every deposition was so slight, and trifling, that it was impossible to found a charge on any thing that was deposed.

57. 58. Among other accusations, it was attested, that he had been heard to say, *I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days*
59. *I will build another without hands.* But neither did this appear of weight sufficient for their purpose.

60. The high priest then rising up, asked Jesus, What he had to say
61. in his own defence? But as he had been charged with nothing, he answered nothing.

Among other questions the high-priest asked him, Whether he was the Christ?

62. To this Jesus thought proper to answer in the affirmative; and referred him to a grand event, the destruction of Jerusalem, speedily coming on, for a confirmation of his pretensions.

63. 64. This was all, that was desired. The high-priest in great emotion, cried out, What need we further witnesses? you have heard the blasphemy.

54. It was then near midnight, which might be cold at that season, tho the day might be warm. This all travellers tell us is a common case.

56. *Ισαί αι μαρτυρίαι εκ των:* *The depositions were not equal*—that is, either equal to a sentence of death; or perhaps, because they were contradictory.

62. Tho Jesus's referring the high priest to such an event, could have no effect at *that time*; yet it furnished a strong, and perhaps a *recorded* argument afterwards. It then became prophecy.

On this, the whole council resolved, they had now sufficient evidence to reach his life.

The assembly then rose, and for the present left him in the hands of the servants ; who seemed to vye with each other in shewing him every instance of indignity, and offensive behaviour. 65.

In the mean time Peter continuing in the hall, was accosted by a servant maid, as a person, that belonged to Jesus. But in great agitation he denied, that he had any knowledge of him. He left the hall however, and went out into the porch ; where he heard the cock crow. 66. 67. 68.

It happened, while he was there, another maid seeing him repeated the former observation ; which Peter denied a second time. Soon after some other people coming up, affirmed, there could be no doubt about the matter ; for his very speech betrayed him to be a Galilean — On this Peter, with vehement imprecations, declared, that he was not even acquainted with Jesus. 69. 70. 71.

Soon after, he heard the cock crow a second time ; which brought the words of Jesus full into his memory. In an agony of distress he ran out ; and gave vent in private, to the bitterest tears of self-conviction, and remorse. 72.

Thus far the chief priests had been endeavouring only to procure evidence against Jesus ; for they had no power, under the Romans, to put a criminal to death. They had concerted the matter how-

CHAP.
XV.
1.

72. The word *πιβάλω* cannot signify, *when he thought thereon*. Some render it, as here, *he ran or threw himself out* : and others, *he covered his head with a mantle*. — None of the evangelists hath related so circumstantially, as St. Mark, the denial of St. Peter, which hath always been considered as a singular argument of the simplicity, truth, and openness of St. Peter's character. As St. Mark is allowed, on all hands, to have written from him, it is probable, he was obliged by that apostle to be particularly circumstantial in the detail of this event.

ever so, as to carry him, tho at that early hour, for it now drew towards morning, before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; who was on all occasions ready to oblige them. But as they did not think, that Jesus's confessing himself to be *the Messiah* would have much weight with a heathen magistrate, they changed the word *Messiah* into *the king of the Jews*; which, tho an equivalent expression in the language of their prophets; was yet greatly more offensive to the Romans. Pilate accordingly asked him, whether he really professed any claim of this kind? To this Jesus answered, that he did not in a temporal sense, as they accused him; but in a spiritual sense he did.

3. 4. 5. In the mean time, the chief priests laid many, and grievous accusations to his charge: but he answered nothing; which Pilate took notice of with surprise.

6. 7. 8. 9. That magistrate however soon perceiving, that the matter was
10. 11. of very frivolous import, determined on an expedient to release him.

It was an annual custom, at the passover, for the Roman governor to release a prisoner, at the option of the people: and as there happened to be, at that time, a very notorious offender, one Barrabbas, in custody; Pilate supposed, that, as the difference between Jesus and him was so very striking, the people could not hesitate about the matter. It happened however otherwise; for as Pilate plainly shewed an inclination to save Jesus, they clamoured the louder, desiring, that they might have their privilege of option: and requested, that Barrabbas might be the favoured person.

11. This cannot well be supposed of *the people in general*, at that early hour, before they could be collected; but rather of the servants, and retainers of the temple; who, no doubt, amounted to a large body. And even these were wrought up by the chief-priests, as it appears, to favour their design. See Matt. xv. 11.

Pilate again demanding, in a sort of derision, with a view to raise compassion, what he should then do with the king of the Jews? they all cried out, demanding that he might be crucified. 12. 13.

Pilate, a third time interfering, informed them, that nothing worthy of death had been laid to his charge. But it availed nothing: the clamour rose higher; and they all with one voice demanded, that he might be crucified. 14.

Pilate therefore unwilling to disoblige the high-priest, and his party, released Barrabbas; and condemned Jesus to be scourged and crucified. 15.

Jesus was then delivered to the soldiers for execution, who had the same liberty allowed them of exercising their wanton cruelty upon him, which had been allowed before to the servants of the high priest. They immediately called the whole cohort together into the guard-room; where cloathing Jesus in a purple robe; and putting a mock-crown on his head; and a reed for a sceptre in his hand, they first retired a few paces, and saluting him, cried, Hail, king of the Jews. Then taking the reed out of his hand, they struck him on the head; and spit upon him.—Then retiring again, as if they had been guilty of some high offence, they worshipped him as a God. 16. 17. 18. 19.

After they had thus sated their brutal malice, they took off the purple robe, and replacing his own garments, led him to death; 20. 21.

15. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 26.

17. See Matt. xxvii. 29.

18. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 29.

21. He is said to be *the father of Alexander and Rufus*. These persons were probably well known at that time.—These little indirect appeals to persons, (which are frequent in the new testament,) are commonly thought, and with justice, to be an argument in favour of the truth of these simple narratives.

21. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 32.

obliging one Simon, a Cyrenian, whom they accidentally met, and probably supposed to be his disciple, to assist him in bearing his cross.

22. 23. 24.
25. 26.

Having thus brought Jesus to a mount called Golgotha, which signifies the place of a skull, they offered him in derision, after his fatigue, an embittered draught, which he refused.

27. 28.

It was now only nine o'clock in the morning; so expeditiously had the chief priests hurried over the affair, since his apprehension on the preceding evening. The soldiers then nailed him to the cross, and placing over his head an inscription, *The king of the Jews*, they sat down to part his garments among them. Two malefactors also were crucified with him, one on each hand; so completely was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled, which describes the Messiah, *as being numbered with transgressors*.

29.

30.

What had been alledged against him at his trial, was now retorted with great scorn: *Thou, that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days; save thyself, and come down from the cross*.

31. 32.

The chief priests also and Scribes joined their revilings with those of the people: *He saved others*, they cried, *let him now save himself: let Christ, the king of Israel, descend from the cross, and we will believe*.

33.

About twelve o'clock, a sudden darkness spread over the sun; and threw an awful gloom over the whole transaction.

34.

At three, Jesus, who had now hung six hours on the cross in patient suffering, being in the agony of death, cried out, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaethani*: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

28. See Isaiah liii. 12.

34. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 46.

They who stood by, mistook the expression; and while one ran to reach a sponge-full of vinegar, at the end of a reed, to his mouth; another said, Let him alone; let us see whether Elias will come to save him. 35. 36.

Jesus crying out again in the same impassioned manner, expired: when instantly the veil of the temple, which separated the Holy of Holies, was rent asunder; indicating plainly, that all distinction between Jew, and Gentile was now abolished. 37. 38.

Among other testimonies of the awful grandeur of this great event, that of the Roman centurion, who attended the execution, should not be omitted. This officer, seeing the many solemn, and supernatural circumstances, which accompanied the death of Jesus, could not help crying out, Certainly this person was the offspring of some God. 39.

A few of Jesus's disciples, and of those, who were attached to him, were present at this mournful scene. Some pious woman also, who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance. 40. 41.

But among those, who thought themselves most concerned, on this solemn occasion, was Joseph of Arimathea, a man of fortune, and consequence, and greatly attached to Jesus. This pious person, as the evening drew on, and as the next day was the sabbath, when nothing could be done, went boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. 42. 43.

Pilate scarce conceiving, that he could be dead, made himself sure of that point from the centurion, who attended the execution; and then granted the request. 44. 45.

Joseph taking the body from the cross, wrapped it in fine linen, and deposited it in a new tomb, which he had hewn in a rock; and

39. See a note on the parallel passage of St. Matthew.

C H A P.
XVI.

fixed a large stone, before the door of the sepulchre, to which it had been fitted.

1. 2. The day after the sabbath, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices to embalm the body. In the way, they consulted how they should remove the large stone, which closed the sepulchre. But on coming to the place, they found, to their great astonishment, that it was removed. They then entered the sepulchre; and to their still greater astonishment, saw an angel sitting in splendid array. As they retreated through fear, the angel thus accosted them. Be not afraid. I know your errand; you seek your crucified Saviour. He is not here. He is risen from the dead. See the place where his body lay.
7. ———And now go, tell his disciples to meet him in Galilee, as he formerly ordered them.
8. On this the women leaving the sepulchre in great confusion, and agitation of passions, were met by Jesus, who first discovered himself to Mary Magdalen. She immediately ran to his disciples, whom she found in sorrow, and great dejection; and endeavoured to animate them with the joyful news of Jesus's resurrection. But they gave little credit to her story.
9. 10. 11.
12. 13. After that, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples themselves, as they walked into the country. They likewise informed the rest of their brethren; but were equally discredited.
14. Soon afterwards he appeared again to all the eleven disciples assembled together; and gently chid their unbelief in a matter, of which he had so often spoken to them; and which had been so well attested by eye-witnesses.

7. In the text it is, *tell his disciples and Peter*. The particular mention of that apostle was probably to shew him, that notwithstanding his denial of Christ, his repentance had restored him.

Jesus then gave them their last instructions. Go, said he, and preach the gospel, from henceforth, to all the world. They, who believe it's doctrines, and obey it's rules, shall be saved: but they, who reject it's evidences, must take on themselves the consequence of rejecting it's gracious offers: and that you may be the better enabled to preach the gospel, you shall be endued with the power of working miracles. 15. 16. 17. 18.

After Jesus had given them these instructions, he ascended into heaven: and they, obedient to his word, went out, and every where preached the gospel; and confirmed the truth of it by miracles. 19. 20.

19. It seems to have been necessary for the apostles to *see* our Saviour ascend into heaven, that they might be proper witnesses of his *ascension*. To see him *alive* after his death, was evidence sufficient of his resurrection. Dr. Lardner, in apology for St. Matthew, and St. John, who have omitted mentioning the ascension, says, its truth is included in the resurrection: and, no doubt to the believer, it may be; but not to the gainfayer, who might deny the fact, and say, that Christ had only secreted himself. It appears to me therefore that if none of the evangelists had borne testimony to the ascension of Christ, it would have been a great desideratum in the sacred history; and I was rather surprized at finding so judicious a critic as Dr. Lardner laying so little stress on the mention of this circumstance. See his letter to Mr. La Roche, in the appendix to his life by Dr. Kippis.

END OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
ST. MARK.

P R E F A C E

T O

S T. L U K E ' s G O S P E L.

AFTER St. Matthew's gospel, which gives us the clearest, and fullest account of the life, and doctrine of our blessed Saviour, we have St. Mark's; which adds a few circumstances to the sacred story; but is chiefly valuable, as a confirmation of St. Matthew.

The next in order is St. Luke. This evangelist is supposed to be that Lucius, who is mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of Romans; again in the thirteenth, and eleventh of Acts; and again in the fourth of Colossians; where he is styled a physician. Tho his name has rather a Gentile, than a Jewish sound; yet he is generally supposed to have been a Jew—at least a Jewish believer. As to a common opinion of his having been a painter, there seems not to be the least foundation for it in antiquity.

From the pen of this evangelist we have a rich accession to the sacred story. The history of the birth of John the baptist—several particulars relating to the birth of our Saviour—the parable of the good Samaritan—of the prodigal son—of Dives, and Lazarus—of the wicked judge—of the Pharisee, and publican—the account of the ten lepers—of Zaccheus—of the penitent thief—of the journey to Emmaus—and many other particulars of less moment, are all recorded solely by St. Luke. He had his intelligence, as he himself tells us, from different witnesses; and had before him therefore a large field of information.

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S T. L U K E.

C H A P.

I.

1. 2.

3.

4.

AS many have written accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ, on which the Christian builds his faith; I thought it right, my respected Theophilus, to draw up my account also of these things. I have had so perfect an information on this subject,

3. It is not well decided, whether *Theophilus* is a real person, or a feigned one. The title of *excellent* implies the former: the *name*, which may suit any religious person, implies the latter.

3. St. Luke tells us, he wrote *from the information of others*; which is a strong argument against those, who contend, that the apostles, and evangelists wrote every article under immediate inspiration. Things, which they relate as eye-witnesses, or from proper attestation, certainly required no inspiration.—See more on this point, in the general preface.

4. St. Luke speaks here of several gospels, which had been written in his days; and tho the *particulars* of what he says, rather incline us to think favourably of those gospels; yet his *general sense* gives us an unfavourable idea of them. For if so *many gospels*, in those days, had been written *faithfully*, what occasion was there for St. Luke to write another? None of the ancients, nor any good interpreters, suppose, he means St. Matthew's gospel, or St. Mark's; neither of which, it is probable, was written at that time: and if they were, it is very improbable, that he had seen them.—The evangelist says, he writes *in order*; from which some harmonizers, particularly Le Clerk, have taken it for granted, that he is more exact, in point of time, than any of the evangelists; and have reduced the chronology of the other gospels to the chronology of St. Luke. But other critics are of a different opinion; and conceive, that St. Luke had no intention to testify his *particular exactness in point of time*: but only that *he would relate events in the order, in which he had received them*. In general, it is supposed, that

ject, that I am inabled to assure you, and all other Christians, of the truth of that religion, in which you have been instructed.

5. 6. In the days of Herod, king of Judea, lived a priest, called Zacharias; who, with his wife Elizabeth, were eminent examples of piety. They were both far advanced in years; and had no children.

8. 9. As this holy priest, according to the order of his course, was offering incense in the sanctuary, while the people were praying without, an angel appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar. Zacharias was surprized at the vision: but the angel repreffing his fears, told him, that his prayers were heard—that God, in his own time, would grant him a son—that his name should be John—that he should be the source of great joy to all nations—that he should live with the austerity of a Nazarite; and act under the influence of the holy spirit of God—that he

in strict chronology he is even the least exact of any of the evangelists. He tells us, that he mentions such facts, as were delivered to him by those, who, *from the beginning were eye-witnesses*. As he himself therefore was *not an eye-witness* of the things he records, but had his accounts from different people; we may suppose, he could not be so exact in combining facts, as St. Matthew, who had been an eye-witness of them himself. Grotius indeed says, that, in omni hac historia, Lucam ad rerum, magis, quam ad temporum ordinem attendere: (see his note on cap. iv. 21.) by which, I suppose, he means, that St. Luke puts facts together in such a way, as to make them illustrate each other.

8. See an account of the several orders of priests 1 Chron. xxiv. 10.

10. There is something beautiful, and poetical in that part of the Jewish ceremonial, which supposes the prayers of devout worshippers to be wafted to heaven in odoriferous wreaths of incense. David adopts the idea; *my prayer is set forth as the incense*.

13. It is well known, how much the Jews always wished for offspring, in hopes of giving birth to the Messiah.

14. A name which signifies the *mercy of God*; or (as Bishop Pearce thinks) *joy and gladness*.

should

should call the children of Israel to repentance—and, in the power of Elijah, should prepare the world for the reception of the Messiah. 17.

Zacharias recovering from his surprize; was at first, struck with the improbability of the thing, on account of the very advanced age, both of himself, and his wife; and asked the angel, By what sign, he should know the truth of this gracious message? 18.

The angel told him, that his name was Gabriel; and that the very appearance of such a heavenly messenger was sign sufficient: but that, as he wanted a farther sign, he should have one, which should also be the punishment of his unbelief. You shall be dumb, said the angel, till this event be fulfilled. 19.

During this interview, a much longer time had elapsed, than seemed necessary for Zacharias's stay in the sanctuary; at which the people were not a little surprized. But when he came out of the temple, they soon found, he had seen a vision, from those dumb actions, which sufficiently explained his meaning. 20.

Notwithstanding this visitation, Zacharias continued to perform the functions of his office at Jerusalem, till the time of his administration was ended. He then retired to his house in the 21.

17. *To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.* This is a difficult passage. Bishop Pearce, and other commentators, consider Christ as the *child*, to whom the fathers should be turned. I own I think this a forced interpretation. The fact is, the words of Malachi (iv. 6.) are not quoted here; but only alluded to. In Malachi the sense is fuller: *He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children; and the heart of the children to their fathers*; which, in my opinion, means only to express that general philanthropy, which the Christian religion was intended to introduce; and which the prophet Isaiah characterizes by those pathetic images of *the lion and the lamb lying down together*, &c.—I think it remarkable, tho I never saw it remarked, that the bible should conclude, as it does in this passage of Malachi, with such a noble prophecy of the advent of the Messiah. *Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children; and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come, and smite the earth with a curse*: that is, lest I execute the great curse, of which you read in the beginning of Genesis. Thus the beginning, and the end of the bible are brought to one great point.

country

country with his wife; who sequestering herself from the world, spent her time in praising God for his wonderful mercies to her.

26. 27. About six months after this event, the angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a virgin of the name of Mary; who was espoused to Joseph, a person of low station, tho immediately descended from the house of David. To this holy virgin the angel appearing, pronounced her blessed among women; and soon eased her apprehension on so wonderful an interview, by telling her, that she was highly favoured in the sight of God; who had appointed her to be the instrument, in a miraculous manner, of bringing the Messiah into the world.

36. The angel then, as a confirmation of the truth of this great event, informed her of the miraculous circumstances, in which her cousin Elizabeth was then rejoicing; adding, that events, which men call miraculous, were as easy to God, as the most ordinary effects of his power.

38. Mary with great humility, received this divine salutation; praying, that God would make her worthy of the favours he had bestowed.

39. 40. After this wonderful information, her first care was, to impart the circumstances of it to her cousin Elizabeth, who was so greatly concerned in them. Accordingly she took a journey to the mountainous country, where Zacharias dwelt.

41. On their first interview, it pleased God, to give all these holy persons, in a singular manner, a new conviction of the truth of his

39. I should rather suppose this to have been her errand, than to prove the truth of the angel's veracity.

39. If Zacharias dwelt at Hebron, as is supposed, the length of the journey was about one hundred and twenty miles. See Well's geography.

promises. Mary had no sooner saluted Elizabeth, and told her errand, than the child, with which Elizabeth was now pregnant, seemed to leap for joy. On this, as if the whole truth had burst upon that holy woman at once, she cried out, in the spirit of God :

“ Blessed art thou among women ; and blessed the holy child
 “ thou hast conceived. With what humble thankfulness should
 “ I receive this visit from the mother of the Messiah ! Even the
 “ very babe within me leapt for joy. Blessed art thou, who
 “ hast believed these glad tidings ; for every thing that the Lord hath
 “ spoken, shall come to pass.”

Mary also, seized with the same divine enthusiasm, thus uttered her joy :

“ Praised, praised be the Lord for all his goodness ! My humble
 “ state prevents not his making me the instrument of happiness
 “ to all generations. It is the Almighty, who hath done this.
 “ To him alone our praise is due. His mercy rests on them that
 “ fear him ; however humble their stations are : while pride, how-
 “ ever exalted, shall be brought low.—Thus hath he treated
 “ his holy people : and thus, in remembrance of his promise to
 “ Abraham, will he ever treat them.”

After the departure of Mary, who prolonged her visit about three months, Elizabeth was delivered of a son ; and all her relations came to rejoice with her on so wonderful a birth.

On the eighth day the child was circumcised ; and named Zacharias after his father. But Elizabeth opposing it, they applied to Zacharias himself ; who calling for a writing-table, wrote on it, that his name should be John : at which they, ignorant of the reason, were greatly surprized.

64. Soon after, the happiness of this pious family was compleated by the restoration of Zacharias to the use of his speech; which he immediately employed in blessing and praising God.

65. In the mean time, the fame of these wonderful events was spread
66. through the whole country; and struck all who heard them, with fear and reverence. Every one concluded, that a child thus born, must be intended to fulfill some wonderful purpose of God.

67. In the foresight of this, Zacharias composed the following hymn.

68. "Blessed be the God of Israel, who hath at length visited his
69. 70. "people; and raised up that salvation in the house of David,
"which all his holy prophets from the beginning of time, have
71. 72. 73. "foretold. The covenant, which he made with our fathers, the
74. 75. "oath, which he swore unto Abraham, are now compleated in
"our deliverance from our spiritual enemies; that we may serve
"God without fear, in righteousness, and holiness of life. And
76. "thou child art destined by God to be the forerunner of this great
77. 78. "event—to prepare the way for that mighty Saviour; who through
"the mercy, and free grace of God, will give salvation to his
79. "people by the remission of their sins—will guide them into the
"paths of eternal peace—and extend this mercy to all, who yet
"sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death."

80. Such was the holy joy, and religious thankfulness, which ran through every branch of this pious family.

In the mean time, as the child advanced in years, he advanced also in the favour of God: and when he came to the use of his

79. It is evident from this whole hymn, but especially from the conclusion of it, that Zacharias was not misled, as his countrymen commonly were, by the notion of a worldly deliverance; but had a perfect idea of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom.

own judgment, he retired into the wilderness; where he led a severe life of abstinence, meditation, and prayer; till the time appointed, arrived, when he was to take upon him his public ministry.

About the time of John's birth, Augustus Cæsar had ordered the country of Judæa to be inrolled by Quirinius. In consequence of this order, every one went to his family-town to be registred among his ancestors. And Bethlehem being the family-town of Joseph, and Mary, who was now far advanced in her pregnancy, they were both at this time, under the necessity of taking a journey thither.

C H A P.
II.

1. 2.

3.

4. 5.

1. The word *συκεμενη* often means only Judea.

1. This inrolling was a preamble to a general tax; which Augustus seems to have kept hanging over the head of Herod, with whom he was much displeased. Herod, by embassies, and evasions, got the tax put off from time to time: but the inrolment went on.

2. Few passages in the New Testament have given more employment to the critical abilities of learned men, than the inrolment here mentioned by Quirinius. It seems to contradict, in point of time, the evidence of prophane historians; particularly of Josephus. Dr. Lardner, in the first vol. of his *Credibility*, hath employed many more pages to settle this point, than St. Luke's whole gospel contains. He examines with great erudition, and patience, the opinion of learned men on the subject; and settles it, that there were two inrolments made by Quirinius; and translates the second verse thus, *This was the first inrolment made by Quirinius, governor of Syria.*

4. There is a difficulty, which hath already been mentioned, in the two genealogies given us by St. Matthew, and St. Luke; both of which appear to belong to Joseph. — This verse furnishes one solution of the difficulty; and not a bad one. If Mary had been considered only as Joseph's wife, she had no occasion to go to Bethlehem. *His* going would have been sufficient: and we can hardly suppose, that in the situation, in which she then was, he would have taken her. From *her* going therefore we are led to suppose, that *she* was under the necessity of going likewise. This would have been the case, if her father had been dead, without male-issue. She would then have been the representative of her family. — In that case also, she must by the Jewish law have married a kinsman. Joseph's family and hers therefore would be the *same*; and one pedigree would include both. This seems very plausible; but there are some, who suppose this inrolment was made according to the Roman customs, by which women, as well as men were inrolled.

6. Thus through Cæsar's order for the enrolment of Judæa, was brought about the birth of Christ at Bethlehem; according to the
 7. prophecy of Micah; for here the holy virgin was delivered. As Bethlehem was necessarily at that time crowded, the conveniences, of course were small. The guest-chamber in the house, where Joseph, and she lodged, being engaged, they were obliged to take what accommodations they could have in an out-house, where cattle were commonly kept. Here Jesus Christ was born; and laid in a manger.

8. 9. The first publication of this great event was in the same stile of simplicity.

As a company of shepherds, near Bethlehem, were watching their flocks by night, a sudden illumination spread round them; in the midst of which an angelic form appeared; and instantly dispelled their fears by accents of joy.

10. "Fear not, said he, I bring glad tidings, not only to you, but
 11. "to all people. This day is born in the city of David, a Saviour,
 12. "which is Christ the Lord. As a sign, you shall find the holy
 "babe wrapped in swaddling cloaths, and lying in a manger."

13. As the angel spoke, the splendid light, which encompassed the place, appeared suddenly peopled with a number of the heavenly host, who thus joined in a song of praise.

14. "Glory be to God in the highest; and on earth peace, and good
 "will to man."

6. Chap. v. 2.

7. The word *καταλυμα*, which is here translated *an inn*, is in Luke xxii. 11. and in Mark xiv. 14. translated *a guest-chamber*, and an *upper-room*; either of which is a better word here.

9. This illumination, was the *Shechinah*, or divine light, which the Jews always understood to be *the sign of God's authority*; whether they heard a voice alone, or saw a form. This idea was very familiar in the early parts of the Jewish history.

As

As soon as this glorious vision disappeared, the shepherds, in obedience to it, went immediately to Bethlehem; where they found every thing, as the angel had described. Then returning with joy, they related publicly all the wonderful circumstances, they had seen. —From all these things the people in general expected some great event to follow; tho they knew not what; but Mary laid them all up with holy faith, in her heart; and saw more and more, the gracious promises of God taking effect.

On the eighth day the child was circumcised, and called Jesus, according to the directions, which the angel had left with Mary: and soon after, on the occasion of her purification, he was carried to Jerusalem, to be presented, as a first-born, to the Lord, when the proper legal sacrifice was offered.

There dwelt, at that time, in Jerusalem, a man of very eminent piety, whose name was Simeon. This devout person having long waited with holy faith to see the completion of the promises of God, had a revelation from heaven, that he should not die, till he had seen the Messiah; and being directed by the spirit of God to enter the temple at the time, when Jesus was brought there; as soon as the ceremony was over, he took the blessed child into his arms, and thus spoke:

“ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy promise. Mine eyes have now seen thy salvation; which is preparing to spread joy through all nations—the glory of Israel; and the light of the Gentiles.”

24. See Exod. xiii. 2.

33. These things contributed, more, and more, to raise the joy, and expectation of the holy parents.

34. 35. Simeon blessed *them* also ; and turning to Mary ; This child, said he, shall make the great separation between good and bad. His doctrines shall be the test of man's sincerity. In the mean time, such will be the opposition against him, that I caution you, and all his followers, not to expect a time of earthly felicity ; but a time of violence, and persecution.

36. 37. Another holy person likewise, at that time, dwelt in Jerusalem, whose name was Anna. She had from an early period of her life been left a widow ; and was now advanced to a very great age. She had ever been devoted to the service of God ; and was now favoured, as Simeon also was, with the spirit of prophecy.

38. This pious woman coming into the temple, when Jesus was there, was seized with a divine impulse—gave thanks to God for this great completion of all his promises—and explained to the devout persons then present, the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, which was about to be established.

39. Joseph and Mary having now performed all the ceremonies, which
40. the law required, returned to Nazareth with Jesus ; who increased in wisdom, as he increased in age ; and soon began to shew the effects of the divine grace upon him.

41. 42. When he was about twelve years old, his parents took him with them again to Jerusalem to attend the passover ; which they themselves constantly attended. On their return, they missed him ; but
43. 44. as there was a great company of their relations, and acquaintances going

going on before, they concluded he was among them ; and without farther solicitude continued their journey. But in the evening finding this was not the case, they returned to Jerusalem in great distress, and sought him in all parts of the city On the third day they found him in one of the schools of the temple, listening to the doctors, as they expounded the law ; and asking such questions, as shewed a wisdom, which filled every one present with astonishment. His parents were surprized at finding him there : and his mother could not forbear asking him, Why he had been so inobedient of them, and had occasioned them so long, and sorrowful a search ? Jesus answered, How is it, that you sought me ? Knew you not, that I must be about my father's business ?

Tho they were far from clearly understanding what he said, yet Mary laid up this speech in her memory, among the various other notices, she had received of the great designs, which God intended to bring about through her son.

After this, Jesus returned with his parents to Nazareth, and continued with them, till he entered on his ministry ; increasing in grace, and favour with God, and man.

46. It is not probable they sought him three days in Jerusalem : but that they found him on the third day after they had missed him. Two days had already been spent in journeying, and returning.——Our blessed Saviour is often *represented* on this occasion, as *sitting among the doctors*, and disputing with them ; but the text implies nothing more, than his sitting, as was enjoined to learners, *at their feet*.—The assembly of doctors here mentioned, was probably one of those schools, where youth were examined, as was usual, with regard to their proficiency in the law

49. Dr. Doddridge, from this verse, takes occasion to make a very affectionate address to his younger brethren of the ministry ; whom he exhorts not to give up their time chiefly to the curiosities of learning ; much less to amusements ; but to attend to their principal function ; lest in their last moments, they may see reason to adopt the dying words of one of the greatest scholars of his time ; Proh ! vitam perdidi, operose nihil agendo ; *I have spent my life, in being at infinite pains to do nothing.*

Such

Such was the birth, and early youth of these two great personages, so nearly connected with each other; John the baptist, and Jesus Christ. They were born in the fortieth year of Augustus Cæsar; but it was not till the fifteenth of Tiberius, the succeeding emperor, that they entered upon their public ministry.

At that time, by the express command of God, John was ordered to preach repentance to the people, and prepare them for the gospel; agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain, and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough way shall be made smooth: and all mankind shall see the salvation of God.*

In preaching to the people, John inveighed severely against sin, and the consequences of it—he explained to them the nature, and end of true repentance—he told them, that all the peculiar privileges, of which the Jews boasted, were now at an end—that God meant to raise up children to Abraham from all mankind—

1. The date is ascertained in the text by the mention of the chief magistrates then presiding. Learned men have found great difficulty with regard to the fifteenth year of Tiberius. The point is discussed at large at the end of the first volume of Lardner's Credibility.—It is observable, that the names of two high priests are mentioned. The case was, that after the dominion of the Romans, great confusion was introduced into the high-priesthood.—One thing with regard to the date is rather remarkable; which is, that some learned men have calculated, that, if the Jews had continued to observe their years of jubilee, the fifteenth year of Tiberius would have fallen in with the last of them. This is an argument (if it can be proved) of some use against the Jews, who say, the Messiah will appear in the last jubilee. Within the succeeding fifty years, the city and government were destroyed. Baufobre's Introd.

8. See this idea explained Rom. iv.

that the time of this great dispensation was now approaching ; and that men ought well to consider the risk they ran in despising this last great offer of God's mercy. 9.

Such was the general subject of John's exhortations. And when many well-disposed people asked him, What they should do? He particularly recommended to them acts of charity, and mercy. People also of different professions, publicans, and soldiers, repenting of their sins, and coming to his baptism, desired his instruction. To all of them he recommended an exact attention to those duties, which their several employments led them most to transgress. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14.

The gravity, and authority of John's preaching occasioned a general suspense in the minds of men ; and most people were inclined to think him the Messiah. But John, with great warmth, checked all suppositions of that kind. I baptize you, said he, only with water : but that great person, for whom I am not worthy to perform the meanest offices, will baptize you with the Holy Ghost. I only *preach* to you ; but his superior office will be to *try the hearts* of men ; and make the *final separation* between good and bad. 15. 16. 17.

This was John's usual manner of addressing himself to the people : but thinking it his duty to exercise a freer kind of exhortation, on proper occasions, he ventured even to reprove Herod for his incestuous life. That prince however unable to bear so free an adviser, added to his other crimes the imprisonment of John. 18. 19. 20.

14. *Do violence to no man ; neither accuse any falsely.* Put no man in fear in order to raise money ; nor, as *delatores* (which were common among the Roman soldiery,) carry up false accusations to your superiors.

Y

But

21. 22.

But before that event took place, Jesus himself came, among others, to his baptism. In the midst of the devotion, which attended that ceremony, it pleased God to give an awful testimony of the *divinity* of Jesus. The clouds opened; and a splendid light rested upon him; from which a voice proclaimed, Thou art my beloved son: in thee I am well pleased.—But with regard to his
earthly

23—38.

21. Read τῷ Ἰησοῦ, with the article. When one observes a thing regularly done above six hundred times, as Ἰησοῦ; with the article, and finds it omitted, under the same circumstances, not above twenty times, one may fairly suppose a mistake in transcribing. Ἰησοῦ;, without the article, is *one Jesus, any Jesus*. With the article it means *the Jesus*, of whom this history is written.

22. See a note on Matt. iii. 16.

23. Some critics suppose, that the pedigree of Jesus inserted here, was Mary's pedigree, and not Joseph's. Joseph, who is here called the son of Heli, is called in St. Matthew the son of Jacob. This difference they accommodate by an easy parenthesis in St. Luke's text; οὗ (ὡς ἐνομίζετο υἱοῦ Ἰωσήφ) τοῦ Ἠλίου: *being (tho supposed to be the son of Joseph) the son, or immediate male-descendant, from Heli*. This sense also the Talmud strengthens by calling Mary, the daughter of Heli.

Some again suppose, that St. Matthew gives the *real progenitors* of Joseph; and St. Luke *David's heirs* through another channel. He omits Solomon, and takes Nathan: but in Salathiel both their genealogies unite. Other differences may be reconciled in the same way.

The Jewish mode of reckoning descents may also greatly assist us in reconciling the differences between St. Matthew, and St. Luke. The Israelitish family was sometimes registered according to *nature*, and sometimes according to *law*, when the brother raised up seed to the brother. See Lardner's Credibil. Part II. ch. xxxvii.

Other solutions have already been given of the difficulties occasioned by these two genealogies. We may suppose the prophecy of Jesus's springing from the house of David to be fulfilled by his being the *reputed*, or *legal* son of Joseph. See a note on Matt. i. 1.—Or we may suppose, that Joseph, and Mary were both of the *same* family, and had therefore the same pedigree. See a note on Luke ii. 6.

After all, tho there may be some obscurity with regard to these two genealogies at this late day, it is impossible to conceive the evangelists would have inserted them, if they had not known them at their time to be universally acknowledged. They carry the evidence of their authenticity along with them. Genealogies were publickly recorded, and easily compared. Whatever difficulty therefore may arise at this day, it is very plain there was none of early date: for among all the objections against Jesus as the Messiah, made by his countrymen, that of his not springing from the house of David, as far as I recollect, was never made.

~~an~~ibly parentage, he sprang in a direct line from David ; and was at this time about thirty years of age.

C H A P.
IV.

1.

After his baptism, Jesus prepared himself for his ministry, by retiring, under the influence of the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Here he spent forty days in fasting and prayer ; and here the devil was permitted to tempt him.

2. 3.

The first temptation was addressed to the necessities of nature. If thou be the son of God, said the devil, command this stone to be made bread.—Jesus answered him from the words of Moses, that the life of man was not so much sustained by natural, as by spiritual food.—The devil's next temptation was addressed to the passions. See, said he, from this lofty stand, all the glories of the world—it's power, riches, and pleasures. All are mine ; and shall be thine ; if thou wilt devote thyself to me.—Jesus answered, Get thee behind me, Satan ; for it is written, *Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God ; and him only shalt thou serve.*—The devil then displaying before him a scene like Jerusalem, and setting him on one of the battlements of the temple, desired

4.

5. 6. 7.

8.

9. 10. 11.

It is supposed, that St. Luke's gospel was written chiefly for the use of the Gentiles ; and one argument is taken from this pedigree. which is carried up to Adam to shew that Christ was the seed of the woman ; to which the promise was primarily annexed. The Jews, who rested chiefly on their own prophets, were satisfied with deriving his pedigree from David.

23. *About thirty years of age.* Our Saviour, no doubt, was qualified, long before this time, to enter upon his office. Why he deferred it thus long, we can only conjecture. It might be by way of example to future ministers ; or, as this was the age, when the high-priest was allowed to enter upon his office, it might be with a view to fulfil that type more compleatly.

2. See the beginning of the fourth chapter of St. Matthew, together with the note.

2. *Bring forty days tempted of the devil,* as our translation improperly renders it. Place a comma after *τεσσαράκοντα*, and the sense will be, *he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted of the devil.*

8. Deut. vi. 6.

9. See a note on Matt. iv. 5.

him to give a proof of his being the son of God, by casting himself down from thence, and trusting God for his deliverance.—Jesus answered him from scripture, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*—thou shalt not try any unnecessary experiments of God's favour in thy preservation.—The devil being thus disappointed, left Jesus at present, in hopes of finding some more favourable opportunity of prevailing.

14. 15. From the solitary regions of the wilderneys, Jesus returned into Galilee; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, entered on his public ministry; preaching the gospel, and confirming it with miracles; which soon spread his fame through the country.

16. Among other places he went to Nazareth, where he had spent his youth; and going, as he usually did, to the synagogue on the

12. The order of these temptations is different in St. Matthew, where they seem more naturally introduced. The last temptation, which St. Luke makes the second, was so abominable in it's nature, that it seemed most likely to be that, which occasioned Jesus to drive the devil from him.—Milton however, in his *Paradise regained*, thought otherwise. He follows St. Luke's order; and makes the devil carry on a regular chain of temptation from the first attempt, to the last. As Jesus had shewn no inclination to the worldly vanities, that had been set before him; Give then, said the devil, a proof of your being the son of God: Stand on this *pinnacle* of the temple, &c. which *pinnacle* Milton conceives to be a small pointed spire, on which no man could stand without a miracle. Jesus's divine power was to be shewn as well in standing on the pinnacle, as in throwing himself from it.—Tho, in my opinion, Milton shews himself to no great advantage in *detailing* these temptations, yet, it must be owned, he brings Jesus off the pinnacle in a very noble manner.

Strait a fiery globe
Of angels, on full sail of wing, drew nigh,
Who on their plumed vans received him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe air,
And in a flowery valley set him down.

16. *As his custom was.* A strong argument this to enforce the attendance on public worship.

sabbath-

sabbath-day, he stood up, as if intending to read, and expound the scripture. The prophecy of Ifaiah was put into his hands ; which he opened in that place, where the prophet breaks out into the following passage :

“ The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed
 “ me to preach the gospel to the poor—he hath sent me to heal
 “ the broken-hearted—to preach deliverance to the captives ;
 “ and recovery of sight to the blind—to set at liberty them that
 “ are bruised—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

When Jesus had read this passage he closed the book, and returning it to the minister, sat down. The dignity, and grace of his behaviour made an impression on all, who were in the synagogue : but they were much more impressed, when they heard him expound the passage ; and assure them, it was, at that time, fulfilling.

But these sentiments were only the first suggestions of candor. Their prejudices soon began to rise. His being the carpenter's son was an offence, which they could not get over ; and soon led them to negligence, and contempt.

You call upon me, said Jesus, to do mighty works among you : but you consider not, that the disposition of the person, on whom a miracle is wrought, must operate with the power of him, who works the miracle. Your prejudices against me, because I am your countryman, have blinded your eyes, and indisposed you to receive the truth. Many were the widows of Israel, during the famine in the days of Elijah ; and many were the lepers of Israel

17. *He opened the book* : that is, he *unfolded* it ; for the Jewish books were written on long scrolls of parchment, folded over two rollers ; one at each end. *Opening the book* therefore was unfolding one end, and folding the other.

19. Our Saviour plainly alludes to the year of Jubilee, the typical meaning of which he takes to himself. See a note on chap. lxi. of Lowth's *Isaiah*, p. 260.

20. It was usual to stand, when the scripture was *read* ; but it was commonly *expounded* in a sitting posture.

in the days of Elifha: but none of their own countrymen were relieved by those prophets; while the mercy of God was extended to a widow of Sidon; and a leper of Syria. So shall it also be with you. Strangers and foreigners shall receive those favours from God, of which you render yourselves unworthy.

28. 29. This discourse threw the whole synagogue into a rage; and a tumult immediately ensuing, they carried Jesus to the precipice, on which the city was built, with an intention to throw him down: 30. but he miraculously avoided their malice, and left the place.

31. From Nazareth Jesus went to Capernaum, where also he in-
32. structed the people in the synagogue on the sabbath. Here he was received in a different manner. The doctrine he taught; and the miracles by which he confirmed it, made a great impression on many of the inhabitants of that town.

33. It happened, as he was one day teaching in their synagogue, that a person possessed with an evil spirit, being there, called out to
34. him, expressing his own terrors; and acknowledging the divine power of Jesus.

35. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave the man: on which he fell down convulsed, in the midst of the congregation; and appeared as if dead. But he very soon recovered; and was perfectly
36. 37. restored.—This great miracle spread the fame of Jesus, throughout all the country.

30. We have very few instances of Jesus's evading his enemies by a miracle: he generally did it by discrete, and prudent behaviour. See a note on Matt. xii. 16. Some think, among whom was Tertullian, that no miracle is here intended: but I see not how such a transaction could happen without one.

34. Rather, *What hast thou to do with us?*

From

From the synagogue Jesus retired to Simon's house, whose mother-in-law was then lying sick of a fever. Jesus being informed of it, healed her so immediately, that she was able to wait on them at supper. 38. 39.

On the fame of these miracles, numbers were brought to him, that evening, sick of various diseases; and several that were possessed with evil spirits. All of them were healed; and the evil spirits, who knew him, were not suffered to speak. Such testimony he abhorred. 40. 41.

Early the next morning he retired to a desert place. But the people discovering his retreat, crowded around him; and could scarce be persuaded to suffer him to leave them; tho he told them he was under a necessity to preach the gospel in other places. 42. 43.

From hence therefore he went into different parts of Galilee; where he preached sometimes in the synagogues, and sometimes in open places. 44.

C H A P.
V.

1. 2. 3.

As he was walking by the side of the lake of Tiberias, the people attended him in great numbers: and as he could not well be heard, while the croud was pressing around him, he went into a boat, belonging to Simon; whom he desired to push a little from the shore. In this commodious situation he taught the people.

41. See a note on Mark, i. 34.

41. This verse does not seem to be properly rendered in our translation. It should be, *He suffered them not to declare, (οτι) THAT they knew him.*

4. Having finished his discourse, he desired Simon to row further
 5. into the lake, and let down his net. Simon told him, he had been
 6. toiling all the night without effect; nevertheless, at his desire,
 7. he would make another attempt. To his great astonishment, the
 quantity of fishes he now inclosed, was so prodigious, that he
 found his net unable to drag them on shore. He called therefore
 to his companions in another boat to assist him: and so amazing
 was the draught, that both the boats were compleatly filled.
8. 9. 10. Struck with this miracle, Simon fell down on his knees before
 Jesus, and confessed his own unworthiness. James also, and John,
 Simon's partners, were equally astonished. Jesus who had wrought
 the miracle to figure out Simon's future success in preaching the
 11. gospel, told him, that, from henceforward, he *should catch men*. As
 soon as they came to land, all the three forsook every thing they
 had, and followed Jesus.
12. Accompanied by these disciples he continued to preach the gospel
 through Galilee.

13. 14. In one of the towns of this district, a person greatly afflicted
 with the leprosy, came to him; and falling down before him,
 acknowledged his divine power, and begged his assistance. Jesus
 laying his hand upon him, instantly healed him; and forbidding
 him to divulge the matter, ordered him to present himself to the
 priest; and on the certification of his cure, to offer the sacrifice
 commanded by the law.

10. This expression is used both by St. Matt. (iv. 19.) and St. Mark (i. 17.) but neither of these passages conveys more, than the simple idea of *fishers of men*. But St. Luke's words (*αἰχμαλωτίζετε τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*) carry a more expressive idea: you *shall take them alive*—not with a design to kill them as you do fish, but to preserve them.

The miracle however was soon known; and brought such numbers about Jesus, that he was obliged frequently to retire into solitary places, merely to find leisure for prayer; and the common refreshments of nature. 15. 16.

Some time after, as he was teaching in a house, where several of the Scribes, and Pharisees were present, who had come privately from Jerusalem, and other places, to observe him; he wrought the following miracle. 17.

The friends of a certain paralytic, bringing the sick man to him on a couch; and finding the door surrounded by such a croud, as prevented their entrance, went round; and ascending the roof, let him down on his bed before Jesus. On such an instance of faith, Jesus told the man, his sins were forgiven. This raised high offence among the Scribes, and Pharisees, who in their own minds charged him with blasphemy. But Jesus knowing their thoughts, asked, Whether they thought it easier to forgive the man's sins, or to heal his malady? That you may know, said he, I can do the one, you shall see me perform the other. He then bade the man rise, and take up his bed, and walk. On this he was instantly healed; and broke out in thanksgiving to God; in which the people universally joined him. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.

16. The words in the original, I think, imply, that it was his common practice to retire occasionally from the croud to meditation, and devotion.

17. *The power of the Lord was present to heal them*; that is, to heal *the people*, not *the Scribes, and Pharisees*; as the grammatical construction of the words import.

19. See a note on Mark ii. 4.

20. See a note on Matt. ix. 2.

20. How Christ, as a *mere man*, could take upon him to forgive sin, is not easy, I think, to understand. Blasphemous it certainly would have been, as the Scribes, and Pharisees considered it.

27. Soon after, as Jesus was walking into the country, he saw Levi,
 a publican, collecting the Roman tribute; and calling him; Levi,
 28. without the least hesitation, became his follower.

29. Jesus being afterwards invited to the house of his new disciple,
 sat down to table with many people of loose characters, who had
 been Levi's former acquaintances.

30. At this the Scribes, and Pharisees found new matter of offence:
 How is it, said they to the disciples of Jesus, that your master
 sits down to meat with publicans and sinners?

31. Jesus over-hearing them, desired to know, Whether the sick,
 32. or the healthy, had more need of a physician? Or, in other
 words, whether they thought his errand was, to call the righteous
 man, or the sinner, to repentance?

33. Being silenced by this question, they asked another, on the same
 subject. Whence is it, said they, that our disciples, and the dis-
 ciples of John, are bound by rigid rules to fasting, and other au-
 sterities, while yours are left much at liberty?

34. Jesus told them, it was not yet the season to put his disciples
 35. on austerities. Would you have men fast, said he, at a marriage-
 feast? My disciples shall have their time of trial, when I leave
 36. 37. them. But a new patch does not suit worse with an old garment,
 nor new wine with old bags, than rigid rules with young professors.
 38. 39. Things must be accommodated to circumstances; and old preju-
 dices cannot be broken at once.

39. The difficulty of the passage lies in this. Old wine is generally esteemed more than new: but our Saviour, in this comparison, does not consider the *quality*, but the *age* of the wine.

1.

On another occasion, soon after, the same determined spirit of cavilling appeared again. On a sabbath-day, Jesus was passing through a corn-field; and his disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears of corn, which they rubbed in their hands, and eat. This was observed by the Pharisees, who were greatly offended at such a profanation of the sabbath. Jesus reminded them of the practice of David; asking them, If they did not remember, how he had acted in a case of necessity? How he eat the shew-bread; and gave it to his followers; tho the law allowed it only to the priests?—Besides, said Jesus, the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

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On another sabbath, as he was teaching in a synagogue, a man happened to be there, with a withered hand: and as Jesus knew, that the Scribes and Pharisees were watching him, he ordered the man, before he healed him, to stand out in the middle of the synagogue. Then turning to the Pharisees, What think you, said he, is the most acceptable service to God, on the sabbath-day? To do a good action, or a bad one? To save a life, or to practise against one?

No answer being returned, he looked at them with mingled sorrow, and indignation; and bade the man stretch out his hand; which was instantly restored.

1. In the text the words are *the second sabbath after the first*. This is a difficult passage; tho not very interesting. One explanation is, that the Jews observed with *peculiar attention* three sabbaths in the year; one after each of their great feasts—the passover—the pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles: so that *the second sabbath after the first*, was the middle sabbath, or the sabbath after the feast of pentecost—Others say, it was the first sabbath, after the second day of the passover, from which day the seven weeks between the passover, and pentecost were reckoned. These interpreters translate St. Luke's word *δευτεροπρωτος* *the first after the second*: *πρωτος απο της δευτερας*.—But there seems to be much uncertainty in these explanations.

11. Full of rage at the detection of their guilt ; and at their being unable to reply, the Pharisees left the place ; and consulted how they
12. might take more effectual means to destroy Jesus.—He, in the mean time, retired to a solitary mountain, where he continued all night in a house of prayer.
13. The next day he chose twelve, whom he called apostles, from
14. such, as had been his constant followers. Their names were Simon, whom he surnamed Peter ; and Andrew his brother ; James ; John ;
15. 16. Philip ; Bartholomew ; Matthew ; Thomas ; James the son of Alpheus ; Simon the Canaanite ; Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot.
17. 18. From the mountain, where this transaction passed, Jesus came
19. 20. down into the plain where a great multitude of people were assembled,

12. Our translation renders *εν τη προσευχη τω Θεω* in *prayer to God*. But it is very evident, that a *proseuche*, or *house of prayer*, is here meant. These houses were very frequent in the earlier parts of the Jewish history ; and being often situated on mountains, and sheltered by trees, are supposed to be the *high places*, often mentioned, which were not always taken in a bad sense. In the later periods of the Jewish history, when synagogues became more in use, the *proseuche* was less frequented.

15. He is called in the text *ζηλωτης* ; or the zealot. Josephus speaks of the zealots in his time, as great pretenders to religion ; and among the worst sort of people. But forty years before, when Simon was a zealot, we may suppose the name conveyed a different idea.

17. St. Matthew expressly says, this discourse was held on a *mount* : St. Luke as expressly, that it was held on a *plain*. To settle this contradiction hath been matter of great difficulty. Grotius supposes, that St. Luke's *τοπο; πεδιον*, was a *plain on the top of a mountain*. Dr. Clarke supposes, that Jesus returned again from the plain to the mountain. Others suppose the same discourse was held at different times. I own, I think it of little consequence ; and that it may well be reckoned among those matters which have no kind of effect on the narration ; and to which the evangelists themselves paid no attention.—If the *doctrine* be the same, as it certainly is, of what consequence is the *scene* ? However, for the sake of those, who think it of importance, I shall venture to add my solution to that of others.

A passage

bled, many from very distant parts, to hear his doctrine, and to be healed of various disorders. After that benevolent work was effected, he delivered the following discourse

Blessed are the meek, the modest, the humble, and lowly-minded—they who are above this world and its enjoyments. These alone are properly disposed to receive my religion.

Blessed are they who suffer the evils of life, and the contempt of mankind, for the sake of the gospel—who, like the prophets of old, stood foremost in the defence of truth. These shall secure their future happiness: while they, who have recourse to the world for their joys, their pleasures, and their comforts, like the false prophets of old, must expect from the world also their reward.

As it is not from the world that you are to seek for happiness; so neither is it from the world, that you are to learn instruction. All its doctrines must be left behind. In opposition to them, in the first place love your enemies. Bless, when they curse. Pray for them, when they treat you ill. Never revenge an injury: suffer even a second, and a third, rather than return a first.

Be readier to give, than to exact. Let your rule be, to do to others, whatever in reason you could expect from them. For if you love, and assist them merely, who love and assist you; you do only what a heathen himself would do. But if you would love, and

A passage may be produced from Cæsar's commentaries, which I think, may throw some light upon it. Cæsar tells us, that when Ariovistus, and he agreed on a conference, they chose for that purpose a mount in the midst of a plain. *Planities erat magna, et in ea tumulus terreus, satis grandis.* On this *mount* the two chiefs held their conference; while the troops they brought with them, stood around them on the *plain*. If therefore we suppose the scene, where our Saviour held this divine discourse, to be of the kind, which Cæsar describes, and that *he* stood upon the mount, while the *people* occupied the plain, his discourse may be stiled either *the sermon on the mount*; or *the sermon in the plain*.

35. Bowyer conjectures, that *μὴν ἀπελπιζοντες*, should be rendered, *in no wise despairing*: but I like the common translation better, which is more simple; and I apprehend there are good authorities for it.

assist

36. assist others on the principles of my religion ; expect no return from man ; but dedicate your good actions to God ; imitating that supreme benefactor, who is kind even to those, who least deserve his favour.

37. 38. In the mean time, beware of spiritual pride. Let not an opinion of yourselves lead you to censure others. An uncharitable heart is among those things, which are the most unacceptable to God. Be as ready therefore to forgive the offences of others, as to impart to them what you possess ; being well assured, that God's treatment of you will be in a great measure conformable to your treatment of your neighbour.

39. But, above all, it behoves him, who guides others, to keep his own steps direct. If the blind lead the blind, the consequence must be fatal to both. My disciples will have their difficulties to oppose —but none, which I shall not have opposed before them : and the aim of a disciple should be to conform himself to the example of his master.

41. 42. Try your own hearts. Before you correct your brother, examine yourself. It is the vilest hypocrisy to exclaim against his corruptions, while you allow your own. If true religion lie at the heart, it will as naturally produce a good life, as a tree does it's fruit. The good life is the test. It is this, not an hypocritical pretence to religion, which discovers the man. He therefore, who receives the doctrines of the gospel ; and at the same time steadily obeys them ; is established, like a house built on a rock : it stands so firm, that nothing

38. *Shall men give into your bosom*, says the text. This is an allusion to the long mantles the Jews wore, in which the common people used often to carry corn, and other things. See Ruth iii. 15. Neh. v. 13.

48. The observations made here arise very aptly in such a mountainous and rocky country as Judæa. The hills are slightly covered with earth ; and the rains, which are very violent, are apt to overturn such houses, as have not their foundations well laid.

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can overturn it. While he, who leaves a good life out of his religion ; builds his house upon the sand ; which can never furnish a solid foundation.

49.

C H A P.
VII.

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When Jesus had finished his discourse to the people, he went to Capernaum : and as he entered the town, he was met by some respectable Jews, who told him, they were sent by a Roman centurion to beg him to heal a favorite servant. The centurion, they assured him, was a person of a very serious disposition ; and well-affected to the Jewish nation ; having at his own expence built a synagogue.

Jesus immediately went with them : but as he approached the house, the centurion sent his friends to inform him that he thought himself unworthy of Jesus's presence—that he did not think himself worthy even to approach him—but desired him only to speak a word ; and he had no doubt, but his servant should be healed—adding, that if he himself, who was only an inferior officer in an army, could order the motions of others at a distance ; he was persuaded, that Jesus had such power over nature, that he might command what he pleased.

This message was delivered to Jesus before a number of people ; to whom he immediately said, he had not found such an instance of faith even in Israel.

The messengers, on returning home, found the servant perfectly recovered.

10. The *circumstances* of St Luke's account of the centurion's servant, differ so essentially from St. Matthew's, that no harmonizer, I think, can bring the two relations together with any confidence. At the same time, all that is *really essential* in them both, is so *exactly the same*, that, for myself, I feel not the least wish to do it. Both the evangelists place the faith of the centurion, and the greatness of the miracle (which are the points in view) in a light equally strong.

11. 12. Soon after, as Jesus was entering a city called Nain, with his disciples, and a number of people, he met a poor widow, accompanied
 13. by a great multitude, following an only son to his grave. Jesus,
 14. touched with her sorrows, spake comfortably to her; and ordered the bearers to stand still. Then looking on the dead person, he bade him
 15. arise. On this he was instantly restored, not only to life, but to perfect health.

16. This great miracle drew upon Jesus the respect, and reverence of
 17. all, who were present; and spread his fame not only through Judea; but through all the neighbouring countries.

18. In the mean time, the disciples of John, fearing lest the fame of Jesus should rise above that of their master, told him all they had heard.

19. 20. John, who was still in prison, thinking it the best way of instructing them, to make them instruct themselves, sent two of them to Jesus, desiring to know, Whether he were the real Messiah?

21. They accordingly delivered their message. But Jesus taking no
 immediate notice of them, continued the gracious work of healing
 22. the sick, in which he happened to be at that time engaged: and when he had done, he bade them tell their master, what they had
 23. seen, and heard—pronouncing a blessing on those, who should get the better of their prejudices; and from what they saw, should acknowledge, and trust in the Messiah.

24. 25. 26. When the two disciples were gone, Jesus spoke highly to the
 27. 28. people, of John. Your expectations, said he, were justly raised,

12. It was a custom among the Jews, that all who met a corpse should join the procession. This made these processions often very large.

19. See the note on the parallel place in Matt. xi.

when you attended that holy man in the wilderness. You expected to see a prophet; and you saw one of the greatest that ever appeared. The prophets of old only predicted the Messiah. But the dignity of John's office consisted in preparing his way. And yet the office of those, who are directly employed in preaching the gospel, is superior even to that of John.—But tho such numbers, added Jesus, 29. went out to hear John, yet the meek and humble sinner only listened to his instruction, and was brought to repentance. The Scribes, 30. and Pharisees, too proud to learn, rejected God's gracious offers of mercy. To what shall I compare this unteachable spirit? Like the 31. 32. frowardness of children, which is averse to every thing, that is proposed, it will listen neither to one kind of instruction, nor another. John appeared with austerity. His doctrine therefore could not be 33. endured. It was the language of a man possessed. I come with less 34. severity; suiting myself more to social life. The conclusion is, I am a friend of publicans, and sinners. But the wisdom of God will 35. finally shew itself in all his dispensations.

Some time after Jesus was invited to the house of a Pharisee, whose name was Simon; where a woman, who had been a notorious sinner, 36. coming in, as they sat at table, and standing at the feet of Jesus, 37. 38. testified her sins; and at the same time showed her love and respect for him, by very extraordinary acts of humility, and attention.

Simon observing her behaviour, said within himself, Surely if this person had been a prophet, he might have known, how very notorious a sinner this woman is; and would have been disgusted at her familiarity. 39.

Simon, said Jesus, I have somewhat to say to you. A certain creditor had two debtors; one of whom owed him a large sum; the 40. 41. other a trifling one. But, as neither of them was able to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them, think you, will shew the greatest regard, and affection to him? 42.

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43. I suppose, answered Simon, that he, to whom he forgave most.

It is true, said Jesus; and thus the returning sinner, like this woman, shews more extraordinary instances of zeal, and love, than if her sins had been fewer. For that reason therefore such a person as this before me, is so far from being an object of reproof; that she becomes an object of pity, and pardon. You
44. 45. 46. yourself are a witness, how much her zeal hath exceeded all common bounds.

47. 48. 49. Then turning to the woman, he bad her go in peace; assuring
50. her, that in consideration of her faith, her penitence, and love; her sins were forgiven.—This gave new offence to the Pharisee; and those who were with him. However, no farther notice was taken of the matter, at that time†.

CHAP.
VIII.

1. 2. 3.

From hence Jesus went among the neighbouring villages, preaching the gospel, attended by his disciples; and many others, who waited on him, and administered to his necessities; particularly

47. See Matt. ix. 2, and Mark ii. 5.

† This account of Simon's supper is introduced on so different an occasion; and varies, in so many particulars, from the accounts of Matthew (xxvi. 6.) and Mark (xiv. 3.) that many commentators have been led to consider them as totally different events. At the same time, they agree in so many circumstances, that it is not easy to come at this conclusion. It appears to me as most probable, that all the evangelists allude to the same fact. St. Luke, it is true, introduces it earlier in the history. The other evangelists place it near the time of our Saviour's death; with which they connect it; and with which indeed it connects with more apparent propriety. But, excepting this circumstance, we may suppose, that Matthew and Mark mention what Jesus said to the woman; and Luke, what he might say, at the same time, to Simon. Or (if this does not appear probable) how would the truth of scripture suffer, if we should suppose, that Luke might relate on *this* occasion, the parable of the two debtors, tho it was really spoken on *some similar one*? The doctrines, and truths conveyed, are the great points: and these are exactly the same, on whatever occasion they were spoken.

2. Mary Magdalen is commonly conceived to have been a very bad woman, before her knowledge of Christ: but no such intimation appears from this, or any other passage of scripture; unless we *suppose* her to be the person mentioned by Luke in the last chapter.

Mary:

Mary of Magdala, whom he had dispossessed of several evil spirits; and Joanna the wife of Herod's steward.

It was about this time, that Jesus delivered the parable of the sower to a large, and mixed company. Under this similitude he presented a view of the gospel dispensation; and of it's effects on different kinds of men. 4.

As a husbandman, said he, was sowing his seed, some fell on the beaten road, and were picked up by birds. Others falling on a rocky soil, sprang up indeed; but soon withered for want of moisture. Some again fell among thorns, which grew up together with the seed, and choked it. But such as fell on good ground, prepared to receive it, brought forth fruit in great abundance†. This parable Jesus recommended with much earnestness to the attention of his hearers. 5.
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When the disciples were alone with him, they asked him privately the meaning of it. 9.

To you, said Jesus, I can speak without reserve: but to the people in general I speak in parables. Their prejudices shut their ears against *direct instruction*. They must be drawn, as it were, to *instruct themselves*. 10.

With regard to the parable; the seed is the gospel. The beaten-path represents those hardened hearts, which never receive it. The shallow soil, where the seed is scorched, holds out those, who cannot bear the test of persecution; and the weedy soil, those, 11. 12.
13.
14.

† This parable, which is indeed a very beautiful one, seems, in a particular manner, to have engaged the attention of the disciples of Jesus. The three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, especially the two former, have recorded it in words, so nearly similar, that I think it not improbable, that this, and perhaps some other parts of our Saviour's discourses, might have been preserved in writing, and handed about among his followers, before his whole history was put together.

15. whose religion is choaked by the cares and pleasures of the world : while the good ground gives us the resemblance of those, who, in the sincerity of their pious hearts, hear the gospel, and obey it.

16. And now, continued Jesus, it will be expected from you, that you teach the doctrines to others, which you receive from me. No man lights a candle to cover it up ; but placeth it, where it may
17. give light to those, who enter the house. And be assured, that I tell you nothing in private, which is not intended to be published,
18. and explained to all the world. Be attentive therefore to what you hear. He who improves his talents by instructing others, shall abound more and more : while he, who misapplies them ; shall lose by degrees, those talents, which he possessed.

19. 20. About this time, as Jesus was instructing the people, he was told, that his mother, and brethren, who could not get to him through the croud, desired to see him. He took this opportunity, (as he did all others of conveying instruction) to shew how much he preferred such connections, as were founded in religion, to those, which arose only from family, and tribe. These, said he, are
21. indeed my natural relations ; but I consider such chiefly as related to me, who hear the word of God, and obey it.

22. Jesus being now fatigued with instructing the people, ordered
23. his disciples to procure a boat to pass over the lake ; and as soon as they had embarked, he fell asleep.

24. In the mean time, a violent storm arose, and endangered the vessel. But Jesus being awakened by their cries of distress, thought proper to work a miracle to relieve them ; and immediately com-
25. manded a calm. He then rebuked their want of trust in him, after they had seen so many instances of his power. But they instead of giving him any answer, were lost in wonder and amazement, as if this had been the first miracle he had ever wrought.

The

The boat soon landed them in the country of the Gadarenes, 26.
which is opposite to the coasts of Galilee.

Here he was met by a raging demoniac, who had long been 27. 28. 29.
the annoyance of the neighbourhood. Often they had attempted 30. 31.
to bind, and secure him; but such was his strength, that he broke
his chains, and fled into these solitary places, where he dwelt among
the tombs. On seeing Jesus, he ran to him; and kneeling down,
acknowledged his divine power, and intreated, that he might not
be ordered into a place of torment. On Jesus's questioning the
man, he said, his name was Legion; intimating, that this pos-
session was a combination of evil spirits.

It happened, there was a herd of swine feeding near the place; 32. 33.
into which, on Jesus's permission, the evil spirits entered, after
they had left the man; and immediately the whole herd ran violently
down a precipice into the lake, and were drowned.

The keepers flying into the city, and relating what had happened, 34.
great multitudes came out; and seeing the man sitting, clothed, 35.
and in his perfect senses; and hearing all the particulars on the 36.
spot, they were greatly terrified; and intreated Jesus to leave them. 37.
Jesus therefore finding they were not yet in a disposition to receive
the gospel, embarked again, and repassed the lake. The man, 38.
whom he had healed, would gladly have gone with him; but 39.
Jesus chose rather to make an impression on the people, in favour
of the gospel, by leaving among them a standing monument of its
power, and truth.

27. The text says, *there met him out of the city*. The words of the original, *εκ της πολεις*, have not that meaning. They signify only, *of the city*, or *formerly belonging to the city*.

28. Better; *What hast thou to do with us?*

33. See the note on this miracle in the viiith of Matthew.

37. See the notes on Matt. ix. 24.

40. On his returning to the other side of the lake, the croud, which had not yet dispersed, received him with joy.

41. 42. 43. Among them was the ruler of a synagogue, of the name of Jairus, who advancing from the rest, and falling at the feet of Jesus, besought him to go home with him, and heal his daughter, an only child, who lay at the point of death. Jesus therefore went with him, attended by many people.

It happened, that among them, was a poor woman, who had laboured, many years, under a bloody flux, which had been deemed incurable. This person having heard of the fame of Jesus, and wishing to receive a private cure, thought, if she could only touch his garment, it would be sufficient. Accordingly she made the experiment ; and found the desired effect.

45. Jesus however unwilling that such an instance of faith should pass unobserved, turning round, asked, who touched him ?

The disciples were surprized at the question, as the croud was pressing him in every direction.

46. 47. But Jesus persisting in his enquiry ; the woman perceived, that she could not be concealed ; and falling down at his feet, in great confusion confessed the truth.

48. Jesus commending publicly her great faith, which was all he designed, bad her go in peace.

49. During this transaction a messenger came from Jairus's house, to prevent giving Jesus any further trouble, as the young woman was now dead.

50. But Jesus turning to the afflicted father, bad him only believe ; and he should yet receive her again.

51. When they arrived at the house, Jesus suffered nobody to enter the chamber with him, but Peter, James, and John, and the father, and mother of the young woman. There finding the mourners

making

making great lamentations, he told them, they should see, only the common effects of sleep. But they were ready to deride him, knowing certainly that she was dead.

53.

Jesus however removing them from the chamber, took her by the hand, and bad her rise: on which she instantly revived. He then ordered food to be given her; and bad the astonished parents keep the matter to themselves.

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55. 56.

C H A P.
IX.

1. 2.

About this time Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to preach the gospel in Judea; and gave them power to confirm the truth of it by miracles. Make no preparation, said he, for your journey. Take nothing superfluous. Be easily satisfied with your accommodations; and leave those who will not receive you, to the judgment of God. —With these instructions the apostles went out, and executed their commission with great success.

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The fame of Jesus was now so much increased, that Herod became greatly perplexed about him. Some supposed him to be Elias, or one of the old prophets arisen from the dead. But what chiefly distressed Herod, was the fear of his being John the baptist; whom he had unjustly beheaded. These thoughts wrought much upon him; and he was very desirous to see Jesus.

7. 8.

9.

In the mean time the apostles returned from their mission; and related to their master the particulars of it. That they might be the more private, Jesus retired with them to a solitary place, near Bethsaida.

10.

But his retreat was presently discovered; and a great croud coming together broke in upon his retirement; and engaged him in the offices of preaching, and healing the sick.

11.

5. See a note on Matt. x. 14.

12. Night drawing on, his disciples begged he would dismiss the
 13. people, as they could neither get lodging, nor victuals, in that so-
 14. 15. 16. litary place. But Jesus finding they had five loaves and two fishes,
 ordered them to make the multitude, which consisted of about five
 thousand people, sit down in companies of fifty together. He then
 took the loaves, and fishes, and giving thanks, he brake them in
 pieces, and gave them to his disciples to distribute among the people ;
 17. who were not only satisfied ; but left behind them fragments, which
 filled twelve baskets.

18. From hence Jesus retired to private prayer : and being after-
 wards alone with his disciples, he asked them, (as they had just
 been preaching in the country) What was the general opinion
 of men about him ?

19. They answered, that some said he was John the Baptist—some
 Elias—and others, one of the old prophets arisen from the dead.

20. Jesus then asked them, Whom they themselves supposed him
 to be ?

Peter immediately answered, The promised Messiah.

21. Jesus however ordered them not to mention him, at present,
 22. under that name. Before this great truth, said he, shall be fully
 cleared, I must suffer from the malice of the chief priests, and
 Scribes ; and even be put to death. But on the third day, I will
 23. rise again. Whoever therefore means to be my disciple, must
 24. follow my painful steps. To save your lives at the expence of
 your religion, is the greatest loss : and to lose your lives for its
 25. sake, the greatest gain. For what is a man profited, if he should
 gain the whole world, at the expence of his soul ?

26. Consider also with what confusion that man shall meet my dis-
 pleasure at the day of judgment, who has shewn a disregard for
 the gospel, during his life upon earth. But for your comfort
 27. be assured, that you shall see manifest instances of my power, even
 in

in the course of the present generation; and shall have full conviction of the reality of my kingdom.

A few days after this, with a view to give his disciples a fore- 28.
taste of that glory, which might serve to comfort them under the
sufferings, he had been representing; he carried Peter, James,
and John to the top of a mountain; where, after prayer, his 29.
whole person took suddenly a resplendent form: his very garment
became luminous. On his right, and left, stood the two great 30.
prophets of the law, Moses, and Elijah; arrayed in the same 31.
glory. They seemed in earnest conversation with Jesus; and were
heard distinctly to speak to him of the great event, he was about
to accomplish at Jerusalem.

The disciples had been at first asleep, while Jesus was praying; 32.
but immediately awaking, they saw the whole; and Peter in an 33.
ecstasy, cried out to Jesus, Lord, let us fix this glorious scene;
and build tabernacles for thee, for Moses, and for Elijah.

As he was speaking, a dark cloud overspread the whole vision; 34.
and cast a momentary terror over the minds of the disciples. As 35.
it passed by them, a voice broke from it, This is my beloved Son,
hear him. When the cloud had passed, the vision was gone; and 36.
Jesus was left standing alone with his disciples, as before.—By
his order this transaction was kept private among themselves, till
after his resurrection.

The next morning, as he descended the mountain, he found a 37.
great croud assembled; from which a man advancing, kneeled

31. St. Luke, by giving this circumstance (omitted by the other evangelists) adds a wonderful force to the narrative. These two great prophets, by talking of the sufferings of the Messiah at Jerusalem, seem thus in a visible manner, as it were, to concentrate the whole body of prophecy in Jesus.

32. See a note on Matt. xvii. 3.

38. down before him, beseeching him to have mercy on his only son ;
 39. who was possessed by an evil spirit, under which he had suffered
 40. greatly. I hoped, said he, that your disciples could have relieved
 him ; but they could not.

41. Jesus then rebuking his disciples for their want of faith, ordered
 the man to bring his son to him.

42. This threw the youth into new agonies, and convulsions : but
 Jesus immediately relieved him ; and delivered him perfectly restored
 to his father.

43. This wonderful cure drawing the admiration of all, who were
 present, on Jesus, he feared the effect it might have on the minds
 44. of his disciples ; and took an opportunity to fix their attention again
 on the sufferings, which he had told them he must soon undergo
 45. 46. at Jerusalem.—But they had little conception of what he meant ;
 and were much more inclined to give way to worldly hopes, and
 expectations.

47. Jesus to repress these undue notions, in his accustomed manner,
 by a sensible representation, took a child, and told them, that
 48. they who could not lay aside their worldly prejudices, and imitate
 such innocence as was then before them, were neither qualified to
 receive the gospel, nor to inherit the kingdom of heaven. That
 person, said he, will there be greatest, who in this world considers
 himself as the least.

49. 50. On this occasion John testifying his zeal, told Jesus, They had
 seen a person attempting to cast out devils in his name : but as he
 was not a disciple, they had forbidden him. Jesus checking this
 forwardness, said, he wished to consider every one as for him,
 who did not openly appear against him.

51. The passover was now approaching, and Jesus resolving to go to
 Jerusalem, to finish his ministry there by his death, sent two of
 his

his disciples into a Samaritan city, through which he was to pass, to make some preparation for him, and his company. But the Samaritans finding he was going to the passover at Jerusalem; refused to admit him because of their enmity to the Jews. James, and John resenting this indignity, begged their master to call fire from heaven to consume them, as Elijah had done on a like occasion. But Jesus rebuked their improper zeal. You understand not, said he, the mild temper of the gospel. What might become a Jewish prophet in the court of an idolatrous prince, would ill suit a minister of my religion. He took no notice therefore of the ill-treatment he had found among the Samaritans; but went to another village.

About this time he discovered the false pretences of some, who attended him on worldly motives. The zeal of one he cooled by trying, whether he had faith sufficient to give up his temporal expectations for the gospel. Another, whom he invited to be his disciple, begged first to wait, till his father's death; that he might settle his affairs. A third expressed his readiness to preach the gospel; but he first desired to take leave of his friends. Jesus looking upon all these as worldly excuses, observed, that no man, who was in earnest a disciple of the gospel, would make it the *first* employment of his thoughts, to seek for a reason for not immediately closing with it.

54. See 2 Kings, i. 10.

62. *No man having put his hand to the plough, &c.* St. Luke alone mentions this adage. Hesiod's instructions to a plowman, are not a bad illustration of it. *The good plowman, says he, must keep his eye intent on his work, and not gaze about; that he may make a straight furrow.* Hes. Ety. lib. II. v. 61.

C H A P.

X.

1. Jesus at this time, added seventy other disciples, to his twelve apostles; and sent them, two, and two together, to preach in different towns, and villages; intending himself to follow them.
2. The harvest, said he, is truly abundant; pray to God for more labourers to reap it. Encounter with meekness the violence of the world. Carry nothing superfluous with you. Keep the great errand, you are sent on, always in view. Bless the house you enter. Your blessing will either rest upon it, if there are any disposed to receive it, or it will return in comfort to yourselves. Be easily satisfied, and contented, where you are first received. Be labourers worthy of your hire; and shew yourselves not solicitous about worldly accommodations. Heal the sick; and exhort men every where to prepare for the kingdom of heaven by repentance, and reformation. As to those cities, which will not receive you, they must be left to the judgment of God: but let none go unwarned of the danger of their state. In the offers of the gospel, they have had advantages, which Sodom never had; and if they reject them, must expect a severer treatment. Such are the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. They have rejected offers, which might have converted heathen cities; and shall find, that an impenitent hardness of heart, and an obstinate opposition to the gospel, are among those sins, which shall subject them to a severe account. He who rejects you, rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects the Father, who sent me.
3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

1. St. Luke is the only evangelist, who has given us an account of the seventy. This makes the ancient tradition more probable, that he himself was one of them.

4. *Salute no man*, is only a phrase equivalent to, *suffer nothing to retard you*.

6. *Son of peace*. It is a common Jewish phrase to stile a man the son of any good, or bad quality he possesses. The *children of wrath*; the *son of perdition*, are similar phrases.

11. See a note on Matt. x. 14.

With

With this charge the disciples were dismissed; and executed their commission with great success. On their return to their master, they expressed their joy, on having been enabled, through his name, to cast out devils. Jesus assured them, that the power of the devil should more, and more be abridged; and that they should more and more be strengthened against all their enemies. Be not however, added he, so much rejoiced that evil spirits are subject unto you—especially let not ideas of this kind lead you to any thoughts of self-exaltation: but let your great joy, and comfort arise from that holy faith, and obedience to God, which will secure to you the blessed hope of everlasting life.

Then Jesus breaking out into a pathetic prayer, thanked God for laying open the great truths of the gospel, not only to the wise, and learned; but to the very lowest, and simplest of mankind.

17. As our Saviour had set out on his journey to Jerusalem, when he dismissed the seventy disciples, we must suppose, in order to make the evangelist consistent, that he went by very easy, and perhaps not by direct stages; preaching in all the towns, and villages, as he went. But as St. Luke is not very exact in his chronology, these circumstances might perhaps have attended one of those former journeys to Jerusalem, of which St. John speaks.

18. The expression in the original, *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven*, is very grand, and beautiful. It is a sublime idea; and the more so because of its obscurity. I have not retained the original expression; as the uniformity of my work requires these noble flights of eastern sublimity to be simply explained.

19. This expression *I give you power to tread on serpents, and scorpions*, does not at all, I think, relate to the power of working miracles; but is a bold, figurative manner of expressing, that their safety should be God's peculiar care. Thus David speaking of the security of a good man, says (Ps. xci. 13) *Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion, and dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.*

20. *Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.* This expression is commonly brought in proof of absolute, unconditional election. But it seems absurd to prove a doctrine by a figurative expression; the natural meaning too of which is so obvious to common sense.

He

22. He then turned to his disciples, and told them, that the intire dispensation of the gospel was committed to him—that the great scheme of it was inscrutable to man—that no part of it was of human institution—but the whole was a revelation from God.
 23. And be you greatly thankful, said he, to your heavenly Father, for
 24. giving you a knowledge of these things, which patriarchs, and prophets have wished to know; but could see only at a distance in shadowy representations.

25. About this time a Scribe came to Jesus, and asked him, with an insidious design, what he should do to inherit eternal life?

26. Jesus referred him to the law; asking him, What he there found on that head?

27. The Scribe answered, he was there taught to love God with all his heart; and his neighbour as himself.

28. Jesus told him, if he could do that, he wanted nothing else to secure his salvation.

29. But here a difficulty occurred to the enquirer. He knew the circumscribed bounds of neighbourhood, among the Jews especially, who would allow no rites of hospitality to their near neighbours,

22. Such passages as these, I think, should abate much of that prying curiosity of man, which endeavours to scrutinize the depths of divine truth. Whatever may be the precise meaning of the words, *No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father*, they must, I think, at least be conceived to convey some deep mysterious truth. How far they may, or may not relate to the great atonement, and sacrifice of Christ, who dare say? Those parts of the great covenant of grace, which relate to *God Almighty* are, no doubt, incomprehensible to us. Those parts, which relate to *us*—which regulate our faith, and practice, are sufficiently plain. God has, in short, given us sufficient evidence to *believe in the gospel*; and on that evidence we must *exercise our faith* in believing some truths; which we cannot understand.

28. The *impossibility* of doing this—that is of *keeping the whole law*—was what made a Saviour necessary.

the

the Samaritans. Being willing therefore to justify his own practice, he asked Jesus, whom he should call his neighbour?

Jesus instead of convincing him by argument, that all mankind, even Samaritans, were to be esteemed his *neighbours*, obliged him by laying an apposite case before him, to convince himself. 30.

A Jew, said he, on a journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, who treating him with great cruelty, left him on the road almost expiring. It happened, that a priest coming that way, just looked on him; but went on without the least endeavour to relieve him. A Levite, soon after, acted the same unfriendly part. But a Samaritan passing that road, and seeing a man in distress, immediately gave him the best relief he could on the spot; and setting him on his own beast, carried him to a place of security, where he took all the care of him in his power. Which now of these three, said Jesus to the Scribe, was neighbour to him who fell among thieves? 31. 32. 33. 34. 35.

He certainly, replied the Scribe, who relieved him. 36. 37.

Jesus by thus making him acknowledge the propriety of a Samaritan's acting as a neighbour to a Jew, made him in effect acknowledge also the propriety of a Jew's acting as a neighbour to a Samaritan; and dismissed him with an injunction to copy the example.

30. The scene is laid on this road with great propriety; as it ran through a desert; which from being infested by banditti, was called, as Jerom tells us, *the bloody way*. Jerusalem standing high, and Jericho being seated in a valley, it was properly said *going down* to it.

34. Oil and wine are to this day, under the name of the *scriptural balsam*, applied to green wounds.

35. *He took out two-pence*; which is about fifteen pence of our money; and would in that country go about as far as three or four shillings with us; being equivalent to the price of two days labour.

Jesus

38. 39. 40.
41. 42.

Jesus still continuing his journey towards Jerusalem; called for refreshment at the house of two sisters, Martha, and Mary. Both of them were pious women; and both were desirous to shew their respect to him: but in different ways. Martha was solicitous about providing the best entertainment in her power. Mary sat at his feet, listening to his divine instructions. At this indifference about household matters, Martha taking offence, begged Jesus to order Mary to her assistance.

Jesus replied, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and perplexed about needless things: one great business only can be called truly necessary; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her.

CHAP.

XI.

1.

On another occasion, as Jesus had been praying, his disciples begged him to instruct them in the duty of prayer, as John had instructed his disciples.

2.

Jesus gave them the following prayer as the model of their prayers in general.

3.

Heavenly Father, grant that all mankind may have just notions of thee—that they may receive thy holy religion—and live in obedience to thy will, as the blessed angels do in heaven. With regard to temporal things, grant us the necessities of life. With regard to spiritual things, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those, who have trespassed against us; assist us with thy grace in getting the better of temptation; and deliver us from evil.

4.

40. The word in the original *περιεσπαστο* is very expressive; signifying, to be *drawn different ways at the same time*: as if she wished to attend to Jesus; but thought the business of the house more necessary.

40. The word *συναντιλαβηται* signifies literally *to help together with*; and is the very word chosen by St. Paul, to express the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Rom. viii. 26.

41. It is astonishing, that Theophylact, and other interpreters after him, (Bp. Pearce in particular) should explain this noble passage, as if alluding to *one dish of meat*.

Jesus having thus taught them how to pray; taught them next the duty of perseverance in prayer. If any of you, said he, should go at midnight to a friend, and desire him to rise, and supply you with provision for a guest, who had unexpectedly arrived; tho your friend might hesitate at first from the unseasonableness of the hour; yet, on persisting in your request, he might at length, through your importunity, be induced to arise, and give you what you wanted. Be you then ardent, and sincere in your petitions to your heavenly Father, and you shall find, in the end, they shall assuredly be granted. Would any of you, if his son should ask him a reasonable request, give him something detrimental? If weak men therefore attend to the petitions of their children; can you suppose, that your heavenly Father will do less?

About this time, Jesus having cast out a devil from a dumb man, immediately healed him, and restored him to the use of his speech.

On this great miracle the people shewed him every mark of respect. But the Scribes and Pharisees became the more violent against him; informing the people, that he cast out devils merely through a *confederacy with them*.

Others again pretending to be dissatisfied with the miracles he had wrought *on earth*, which appeared to be no evidence of his divine commission; demanded a sign *from heaven*.

To all this malice Jesus replied, that, in every government, an opposition among the members, is fatal. If my doctrines, said he,

6. The idea of a *guest in the night*, was more common in those countries, (where people often travelled at that season to avoid the heat) than it is with us.

7. The words, in the original, are capable of being translated, *My servants*, (or family) *together with myself*, are all in bed.

12. *If he ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion?* The body of a scorpion is not unlike an egg; so that the same similitude is carried on between the *thing asked*, and the *thing given*.

lead one way, and the temptations of the devil another; how is it possible, there can be any confederacy between us?

19. Besides, said Jesus, if I cast out devils through a confederacy with evil spirits, by what means do your disciples cast them out? You will not suppose them to league with devils. Allow me therefore only the same credit, you allow them.

20. If then you allow that I cast out devils by the power of God; you must allow also, that every thing I say, and preach, is of
21. 22. divine authority. When one man overcometh another, and taketh from him his strong holds; you know assuredly, which of the
23. two is superior. So that, in fact, this argument is so very plain, that I may well consider him, who is not with me, to be most *maliciously bent* against me: and he must take that consequence, which he draws upon himself.

24. 25. 26. Let not your wicked hearts therefore harden you beyond repentance. When an evil spirit has left a man, and finding no resting place, returns to him again with new force; the last state of such a person, is worse than the first. Take care therefore lest you Jews, who have been delivered from *heathen ignorance* by the law of Moses, may not place yourselves in a still *worse state*, by rejecting the gospel.

27. As Jesus was thus speaking, a woman from the croud, struck with admiration at the wisdom, and authority of his discourse, cried out, Blessed is the mother that bare you: and all things connected
28. with you. Jesus, who took every occasion of giving instruction, said, Blessed rather are they, who hear the word of God, and keep it.

19. See a note on Matt. xii. 26.

26. See a note on Matt. xii. 45.

27. Such expressions as *the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked*, were often referred by the Jews to the Messiah. They are frequently mentioned in the Talmudic writings.

Jefus having answered the malice of thofe, *who afcribed his miracles to a confederacy with devils*, answered thofe next, *who demanded a fign from heaven*. 29.

This obftinate generation, faid he, feeketh a fign; but no fign fhall be given them, except the fign of the prophet Jonas. As his lying three days in the whale's belly, and afterwards prefenting himfelf alive, was a proof to the Ninevites of his divine authority; fuch proof hereafter fhall the fon of man give to this generation: and they, who reject this laft fign, fhall be among the moft inexcufable, of all finners. The queen of Shebah fhall rife in judgment againft them. She came from a diftant country to hear the wifdom of Solomon; while they neglect a greater than Solomon, at their very doors. The Ninevites fhall rife in judgment againft them: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; tho Jonas was only the type of him, whom they reject. They pretend indeed to great holinefs; but if their hearts were really impreffed with it, they would fhew it in it's effects. As the eye guides the body; fo does a fincere heart, the affections. If fincerity be wanting, the whole is darknefs. Take care therefore, left the light of your minds become darknefs. If the mind be religious, a devout practice will follow. 30.
31.
32.
33.
34.
35.
36.

After Jefus had done teaching the people, one of the Pharifees invited him to dine: but was much furprized at feeing him fit down, before he had wafhed his hands. 37.
38.

29. See verfe 16.

33. There is fome difficulty in the connection of this verfe. The fame words are applied by St. Matthew to the difciples, which are here applied to the Pharifees. But the expreffion is without doubt proverbial; and therefore may admit of different applications. I have followed the interpretation of Dr. Clarke.

39. With vain scruples, said Jesus, do you Pharisees cleanse your
 40. hands; while you leave your hearts impure. Whereas it is the heart
 41. chiefly, which God regards. On it lay the stress; and fear not the
 42. wrath of God for eating with unwashed hands. The outward ob-
 43. servances of religion are greatly inferior to it's moral precepts. Slight
 not therefore the ceremony; but revere the duty. These hypocri-
 44. tical pretences of the Scribes, and Pharisees to more than usual
 holiness spring from pride. Like graves, which appear not, such
 pretenders are full of hidden corruption.

45. In the latter part of this discourse, Jesus having mentioned the
 Scribes also with the Pharisees; a Scribe in the company observed,
 that his censures had involved them also.

46. 47. 48. Jesus answered, He meant it should. How severe, said he, are
 49. 50. 51. you also in your impositions on others! How reluctant to bear the
 52. least burthen yourselves! You take away the key of knowledge from
 them; without applying it to any use of your own. You build
 sepulchres indeed to the memory of the prophets, whom your fathers
 put to death: but in doing this, you only shew yourselves their chil-
 dren; and that you mean to imitate their example. Holy prophets,
 and apostles shall be sent among *you*, as were among *your fathers*;
 and you will treat them with the cruelty of your fathers: that the
 blood of all the holy prophets, that hath been shed from the begin-
 ning of time, may justify that signal vengeance, which shall shortly
 come upon this wicked generation.

As Jesus continued to speak, the Scribes, and Pharisees began to
 urge him with questions; and endeavour, if possible, to provoke him
 to say some thing, from which they might form an accusation.

49. *Therefore also said the wisdom of God.* Many interpreters are of opinion, that our Saviour
 quotes this account of the cruelty of the Jews to the prophets from some book intitled the
Wisdom of God.

Sometime after, a great number of people, collecting about Jesus, he took the opportunity of instructing both his disciples; and his hearers in general.

Above all things, said he, avoid hypocritical pretences in religion. I have always set the truth before you: be you as sincere in communicating it to others. And those doctrines, which you have heard from me in private, preach you to all the world. And be under no apprehensions from the malice and prejudices of men. These injuries reach only the body. But live under a constant sense of that great Being, whose power reaches the soul. That gracious Providence which sustains even the smallest part of his vast creation, will not certainly neglect you.

2. 3.

4.

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6. 7.

8. 9. 10.
11. 12.

But even, if God should suffer you to fall under the malice of your enemies (as in the cause of religion, may be the case) yet still persevere. Consider the reward of suffering for the truth; and the danger of denying it. The highest crime of this kind, into which the wickedness of man's heart can lead him, is that, (into which the Pharisees have fallen,) of ascribing my miracles to the devil. It is a wickedness of the most dangerous kind; as, in a manner, it prevents repentance, by hardening the heart against

2. 3. These two verses in the original, carry the air of a prudential reason against hypocrisy: as if our Saviour had said, *It is certainly wiser in you, on worldly motives, not to be hypocritical; because sooner, or later, you shall be discovered.* But I cannot conceive this to be the real sense of the passage: both because urging worldly principles against such a vice, is a degrading argument; and also because the parallel place in St. Matthew (x. 26) gives a different sense; which sense I have adopted. — Instead of *ελαλησατε* ye have spoken, it is probable St. Luke wrote *ελαλησα* I have spoken.

7. *But even.* It is probable, that ΑΑΑΑ, which is written in capitals commonly in MSS, was inserted for ΑΜΑ, which it so nearly resembles; and then we should have the better sense of *Yea even.*

the

the last great means of conviction.—I conclude my instruction on this head, by warning you, when you are brought before your enemies, not to be solicitous, what you shall say: but to rest assured; that God, in those times of necessity, will communicate to you a proper defence, through the influence of his Holy Spirit.

13. While Jesus was thus speaking, a person from the croud desired him to settle a difference between him, and his brother.

14. Jesus telling him, that an affair of that kind did not at all be-
15. long to him; took an occasion, from this circumstance, to caution his hearers against covetousness.

16. A certain man, said he, found the increase of his goods beyond
17. his hopes; and not knowing where to bestow his abundance; he
18. at length determined to enlarge his store-houses. After he should
19. thus have compleated all his schemes, he resolved to give a loose to the pleasures of life; and fully enjoy the possessions he had gained.
20. But now observe the event. That very night, as he was laying these plans of happiness, his soul was required. Whose were then
21. the goods, which he thought he had secured?—Such is the folly of that man, who is rich in worldly possessions; but has made no provision for everlasting happiness.

22. 23. Be not therefore solicitous about these worldly matters. *Your life* is a pledge from God, that he will provide for the *necessities* of it.

24. 25. 26. That gracious power, which feeds the ravens without their care;
27. 28. and cloaths the lilies without their toil; will assuredly reach out the same protection to you.

Besides, what folly does such solicitude discover? with all your anxiety you cannot add one moment to your lives. Why should you therefore be distressed about other things still as little in your power? Leave then these intruding cares to worldly men; and seek you the kingdom of God. Your heavenly Father knoweth you

29. 30. 31.

you have need of these temporal things, and in his own manner will bestow them.

And be not shaken with the terrors of this life; but oppose them by reflecting on the glories of the next. It is your heavenly Father's pleasure to bestow everlasting happiness on you. Sit loose then to all the things of this world. Communicate its blessings, if you have them, to those, who want them. Provide yourselves bags, which never decay; and lay up treasures in heaven, which nothing can injure. Of one thing be well assured, that wherever your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. 32. 33. 34.

Thus laying aside anxiety for the things of this world, be always prepared for the next; that, at whatever hour your Lord may call, he may find you ready; and reward your vigilance. The uncertainty of your master's coming, is sufficient ground for constant preparation. If the hour, in which the thief should come, were known; the house might easily be guarded: but *constant* vigilance is required.—Be you likewise always ready; for the hour of your death is equally uncertain. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40.

Peter, on his master's making a pause, desirous of knowing, whether these precepts were of *general use*; or to be applied chiefly to the disciples; put the question to him. 41.

32. *It is your father's good pleasure.* The word εὐδοκᾶσθαι signifies a *pleasurable acquiescence*. The idea of God's enjoying; or resting, as it were, in the enjoyment of the happiness he produces, is often touched in scripture: and many passages, which are made to furnish only matter of controversy about election and predestination, might furnish the pious heart with tender, and amiable ideas of the Deity.

35. *Let your loins be girt.* The inhabitants of eastern countries wore long garments, and used to tuck them up, when they prepared for action: to this the text alludes. Horace gives us the same idea,

—veluti fuccinctus cursitat hospes.

Certainly,

42. Certainly, said Jesus, they are meant as instruction for all. Every
 43. 44. man should be that faithful steward, whom his Lord appoints to
 manage his affairs. Happy, and eminently rewarded, shall that
 45. servant be, who shall be found attentive to the discharge of his duty.
 46. But if he shall build upon his Lord's delay, and behave with inso-
 lence, and oppression; his Lord may come suddenly upon him; cut
 47. 48. him off in the midst of his wickedness; and give him up to that
 punishment, which he so well deserves. The offence however will
 always be in proportion to the knowledge. The more informed the
 servant is of his master's will, the greater shall be his punishment, if
 he neglect it.
49. But still of this be assured, that you shall find the discharge of your
 duty accompanied with difficulties, and trials. Peaceful, and gentle,
 50. as the gospel is, it will excite great persecutions against it; which
 51. are indeed already begun. I myself must be the first sacrifice. The
 52. 53. circumstances of this great event are now approaching. After that,
 you must expect to see many scenes of cruelty and distress: insomuch
 that men will break through, not only all the duties of humanity;
 but all the ties of natural affection.
54. 55. 66. Then turning to the people, If you would attend, said he, you
 may as easily see the prophetic signs of these approaching events, as
 57. you can judge of the weather from the appearance of the sky.—And
 when you do see them, your interest surely makes it highly necessary

46. See a note on *cutting asunder*, Matt. xxiv. 51.

49. *What will I, if it be already kindled?*—Some put an interrogation after *Ἰδω*, and read it thus. *What will I? O that it were already kindled!* considering it as a necessary part of the gospel institution. See Bowyer's conject.

55. The heat here mentioned is probably in allusion to the hot winds, which often blow in those countries from the south.

56. These signs are not called *prophetic* in the original; but *prophetic signs* are the only signs; which our Saviour, I think, could mean.

to take warning from them. What person at enmity with a powerful neighbour, would not wish, before things are carried to extremity, to avert those consequences, which he cannot but know are coming upon him ? 58. 59.

It happened, about this time, that some Galileans having given great offence to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; he had taken a severe revenge; and had fallen on them with a body of troops, in the midst of a solemn sacrifice. The affair made much noise; and some people mentioned it to Jesus, as the effects of a divine judgment.

CHAP.
XIII.

1.

But Jesus rebuked their forwardness; and bad them not be so ready to point out the judgments of heaven from such events, as this they had mentioned; nor from any accidental mischief, such as the fall of the tower of Siloam, which had killed eighteen people. The light, said he, in which you should consider these things, is that of being warnings to yourselves. Unless you repent, be assured, that a greater destruction than either of these, shall fall upon you. 2. 3. 4. 5.

To impress this idea the more strongly, he spake the following parable. 6.

A person, who had a barren fig-tree in his vineyard, bad his gardener cut it down, as he had been long disappointed in his 7.

1. The offence, which these people gave to Pilate is supposed to have been their spreading among the people, that they were free, and ought not to pay tribute to any foreign power.

5. Many writers have remarked, that on looking into the events of the Jewish wars, some remarkable calamities befel the Jews, very similar to these. A great body of them were slain, as they were assembled at a sacrifice. See Bell. Jud. VI. c. 9. and VII. c. 17. and many of them also perished under the ruins of the temple. VI. c. 4. VII. c. 10. &c.

7. Some interpreters, who seek a hidden meaning in *every word* of scripture, suppose the *three years* here mentioned refer to the three years of our Saviour's preaching. I rather suppose them an indefinite number: as when we say, *two or three*; we mean not to confine ourselves exactly to these numbers, but only to a small one.

D d

expectation

8. expectation of it's bearing fruit. But the gardener with great importunity, begged him to defer his resolution one year more. I
9. will dig about it, said he, and dung it; and if that produces no effect, there can be no farther hope of it's improvement; and I will then cut it down.

10. It happened, sometime after, that as Jesus was teaching in a
11. synagogue on the sabbath, a woman was there, who through a violent contraction of her limbs, was bowed, as it were, together.
12. 13. Jesus calling her to him, immediately healed her; infomuch that instantly raising herself up, she praised God for his mercy before all the assembly.

14. The ruler of the synagogue, who was a strict Pharisee, observing this, turned to the people; and in a tone of indignation told them, There were six days, in which men might work; on them therefore they ought to come, and be healed; and not on the sabbath-day.

15. Jesus not chusing that such hypocrisy should pass uncensured; asked the ruler of the synagogue; Whether he would scruple to loose his ox, or his ass from a stall on the sabbath, and lead him
16. to water?—And would you be more scrupulous, said he, in loosing a fellow-creature from the bond of an infirmity, which had so long oppressed her?

17. The case, put in so strong a manner, confounded the ruler of the synagogue; while the common people, who considered Jesus's

8. God is the owner of the garden: his prophets and apostles are represented by the gardener; and the Jewish nation, by the fig-tree. According to the tenor of the parable, God, and his prophets are introduced as holding different sentiments. But in our Saviour's parables only the grand scope is to be attended to; which in this parable is, that the fig-tree should certainly be cut down, if it continued unfruitful.

16. *Whom Satan hath bound, &c.* From this, and some other passages, as 1 Cor. v. 5. and in the case of Job, it appears, as if the devil had at that time the power of inflicting diseases, as well as of possessions.

actions.

actions with unprejudiced minds, listened to his doctrine with attention; and praised God for the wonderful works which he performed.

Jesus foreseeing that the gospel should finally prevail over all the opposition and prejudices of men, compared it, in the spirit of prophecy, to a grain of mustard-seed; which, said he, is the least of all seeds; but when it has taken root, it becomes the greatest of plants. In this light, continued he, it is like leaven also, which being hid in a quantity of meal, makes no appearance at first; but will soon begin to ferment, and spread over the whole.

Jesus was still proceeding towards Jerusalem, by slow stages; and preaching in the towns, and villages, through which he passed.

It happened, during his journey, that a person, with an indif-crete curiosity, inquired of him, whether the number of those who should be saved, was not proportionally very small?

Such questions never met with a direct answer. However few they may be, said Jesus, do you strive to be among them. And of one thing be assured, that it is not an inactive wish, but a serious endeavour, that will gain that end. A time of mercy is now offered: but if you obstinately reject it, the door may be shut against you. Many may be the excuses, and pretences, at that awful time: but nothing will abide the test, but a holy, and religious life. As for your claims from Abraham, they will be of no avail. You shall see that patriarch, and his pious descendants, admitted to God's favour; and yourselves, if you continue impenitent, thrust out. Nay you shall see God's favour transferred from you to the Gentiles; and while you are rejected, you shall see them received, whose pretensions you have always treated with contempt.

31. About this time, some of the Pharisees, envying the credit of Jesus; and desirous of removing him from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, told him, that Herod had formed a design to put him to death.

32. Tell that crafty prince, said Jesus, that he can neither hasten,
33. nor delay, the great work, in which I am engaged. I pursue my journey to Jerusalem. It is impossible, that a prophet should perish in any other place.

34. Then breaking out into a tender exclamation, he lamented the fate of that unhappy city, stained with the blood of so many prophets. In vain, said he, hath God extended his mercy to it—that mercy hath been rejected. The period is approaching, when
35. a wonderful desolation shall come upon it; which will at the same time be a full evidence of the truth of the Messiah's kingdom.

C H A P.
XIV.

1.

The offence, which Jesus had lately given by healing a woman on the sabbath, he gave again on the following occasion.

He had been invited on that day, to dine with a Pharisee, who, with others at table, had their eyes upon him; as Jesus knew.
2. It happened (as wherever he went, he was sure to be attended by some in distress) that a man in a dropsy, presented himself. On
3. seeing him, Jesus turned to the Pharisees, and asked them, Whether they thought it lawful to heal him on the sabbath-day?

4. To this question no answer was given; and Jesus healed the man. Then turning again to the Pharisees, he asked, as he had
5. done before, Whether if any of them should hear, that his beast had fallen into a pit, he would not immediately relieve him, tho it should happen to be on the sabbath?

5. An ass, and an ox are often put in scripture for every kind of animal. As in the tenth commandment; and in Is. i. 3.

This question, like the other, was not answered.

6.

At the same time Jesus observing, with what zeal, and eagerness the several guests endeavoured to get the best seats, took this opportunity to inculcate humility.

7.

When a man is invited, said he, to an entertainment, it is highly improper to place himself in the best seat: for if a person of more dignity should arrive; he must then, with disgrace give way. On the other hand, if at first he had taken a lower place; the master of the entertainment coming in, and leading him up higher, would do him credit before the company.—Prudence, said Jesus, will dictate sentiments of this kind to you in *worldly matters*: let it be your part to change them into *religious principles*: for God will always reward humility with exaltation.

8.

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10.

11.

Jesus then taking occasion from the entertainment he had just received; gave his hearers a lesson on charity also, as well as humility. The common mode, said he, of making entertainments in this world, where you invite each other, that you may be invited again, differs greatly from gospel-charity. The truly charitable man lays aside all thoughts of worldly recompence; and assists his necessitous neighbours merely for the love of God, and his gracious promises.

12. 13. 14.

A person in the company, pleased with these instructions, expressed aloud his sense of the happiness of those, who lived under the influence of the gospel.

15.

Jesus closing with the sentiment, shewed, under the following parable, how very undeserving the Jews therefore were, in refusing it's gracious offers; and how justly they should be rejected in favour of the Gentiles.

16.

A rich man, said he, made a great feast, to which he invited his particular friends. But they, instead of attending, when

called

17. 18. 19. called, absented themselves on trifling excuses. The master of the
 20. 21. 22. feast displeased at this neglect, sent out his servants, and in the room
 23. 24. of those unworthy guests, whom he had first invited, filled his table
 with those, whom they accidentally met in the high-roads, and places
 of public resort.

25. As Jesus left the Pharisee's house, he was met by a great croud of
 26. people; whom he instructed in the nature of the gospel dispensation.
 He, who wishes to be my disciple, said he, must not expect a life of
 ease, and luxury. If the advantages of the world, or if his natural
 27. affections, should interfere with his religion, he must give them up;
 28. 29. 30. and be prepared to suffer every thing, which a conscientious discharge
 of his duty may bring upon him. And let these great points be
 well-weighed, and considered. In worldly matters, you are all
 ready enough, especially if it be an affair of consequence, to weigh
 well the expence, and trouble, as well as your own abilities, before
 you engage in it. No man would build a house, without considering
 31. 32. whether he were able to finish it. No king would go to war, till
 33. he had weighed his own strength, and that of the enemy. Let it
 be your business therefore to weigh well what you engage in, before
 34. 35. you profess yourselves my disciples.—Salt is good, but if what

20. It may be observed, that all these excuses are on *lawful occasions*; which shews the irreligion of attending too much *even to necessary things*.

23. The papists, and others of a persecuting disposition, are hard put to it, for arguments to defend their cause, when they use the words of this text, *compel them to come in*, as a principal one. The word in the original, is *αναγκάζειν*; but the context seems to construe it into no idea, but that of *persuading* them to come in: and, except Acts xxvi. 11, I believe no passage in the new testament can be produced, in which it has a compulsory meaning. The word bears the sense also of *persuasive compulsion*, in the best attic writers.

26. The expression in the original, *if a man hate not his father, and mother*, tho it found harshly in our ears, was well understood by those, who were used to such figurative diction.—It is supposed our Saviour alludes here to that public renunciation, which the Jewish proselyte was obliged to make of all his Gentile relations.

ought to be preserved by it, is indisposed to receive its seasoning, no effect can be produced.—Attend carefully to what I say; and let it have its due influence on your minds.

C H A P.
XV.

These divine discourses were heard by the common people with great attention; and many persons, even of wicked lives, were wrought on, to follow Jesus, and become his hearers.

This again gave great offence to the Scribes, and Pharisees. What holiness, they would say, can there be in a person, who keeps company with men of such scandalous characters?

Is there one among you, said Jesus, who having lost a single sheep out of a hundred, would not leave the ninety and nine; and go in quest of that which had strayed? And if he should find it, would he not receive a more sensible pleasure at the recovery of that which had been lost, than at the safety of all the rest?

Or suppose a person, possessed of ten pieces of money, should lose one piece; with what anxiety would he seek that one piece; and what pleasure would he feel from the recovery of it?

If then, said Jesus, we are so affected by the trifling things of this world, how ought we to be affected by the recovery of a sinner to happiness? This is a sight, which even your heavenly Father looks on with pleasure.

From the recovery of particular sinners, Jesus enlarging the idea, considered the recovery of whole nations; and represented, in the following parable, the different circumstances of Jews, and Gentiles—the acceptance of the latter; and the unreasonableness of the former, in expecting that their privileges should not be communicated to others.

4. It should be translated, *Doth not leave the ninety, and nine, and goeth into the wilderness, &c.*

A. certain.

12. 13. 14. A certain man, said he, had two sons; the younger of whom,
 15. 16. 17. tired of the restraint of a well-ordered family, begged his father to
 18. 19. 20. give him at once, his inheritance, and leave him to himself. Having
 21. 22. 23. obtained his request, he set out directly, in search of happiness, on
 24. 25. 26. a long journey. Riot, and prodigality attended all his steps; and
 27. 28. 29. beggary, and distress soon followed. To supply the necessities of
 30. 31. 32. nature, he was at length obliged to submit to the most servile em-
 ployments. But his misery still increasing, he came at length to a
 resolution to return to his father; and try, if possible, to regain his
 affections. With the deepest humility therefore and contrition, he
 returned, almost in the agony of despair. But his father, seeing him
 at a distance, ran to meet him; and throwing his arms around his
 neck, received him with unbounded tenderness; and carrying him
 home, spent the remainder of the day in rejoicing.

The elder brother, in the mean time, was in the fields: but re-
 turning in the evening, was surprized, as he approached the house,
 to hear the sound of music, and festivity. Calling therefore one of
 the servants to him, he enquired the cause; and being informed,
 that his brother had returned safe; and that his father had on that
 account, made a day of rejoicing; he was highly displeased, and
 refused to go in. His father condescended even to intreat him: but
 he was received with reproaches. I, who have served you, said the
 haughty youth, all my life with fidelity, never received the least
 token of any particular attention. But when your prodigal son re-
 turns, after consuming all that he had in riot, nothing is thought
 too good for him.

To all this impropriety of language the father tenderly replied;
 Son, you are ever with me, and have partaken always of my kind-
 ness. Be satisfied therefore; and be not offended at my receiving

15. As the Jews held swine to be unclean animals, our Saviour's sending the prodigal to
 feed them, shews in a strong light his abject condition.

with affection your lost brother, who is restored to me by contrition, penitence, and resolutions of obedience†.

On another occasion Jesus shewed his hearers by the following parable, that the things of this world have no use, but that of being subservient to a better.

C H A P.
XVI.
1. 2.

A rich man, said he, had a steward, who being accused of dishonesty, was on the point of being dismissed. Under this disagreeable circumstance he began to consider what he should do. He could not bear a life of labour; and could not submit to live on alms. After some hesitation, he resolved, at last to make an advantage of his stewardship, before he left it; and to provide for an evil day by making friends of his Lord's debtors. Collecting them together therefore, he examined their several accounts, and deducted a part from each. Jesus then pointed out the management of worldly men, as an example of attention to his followers in their spiritual affairs: adding, at the same time, an exhortation to make the things of this world subservient to their everlasting happiness; assuring them, that if they did not use temporal blessings, as they ought, they could never be qualified to receive spiritual blessings. If therefore, added Jesus, you do not

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† I have given the *substance* of the parable: but the *beautiful simplicity* of the original can be given in no words but its own. The change of person in the thirtieth verse, *this thy son*, into *this thy brother* in the thirty-second, is particularly tender.

1. It is evident from v. 14, that the Pharisees were still among his hearers; and indeed such a discourse as this, seemed more adapted to them, than to his immediate disciples, who had not much of this world's goods to dispose of; tho, in fact, we are stewards, not only of riches, but of time, health, strength, leisure, opportunities, parts, knowledge, in short, of every thing we enjoy.

11. The idea, in a *mortal state*, of calling nothing *our own*, is often illustrated by heathen writers.

Nimium

12. first wean your affections from the love of worldly things, you can never be prepared for heavenly : and if in the use of these transitory possessions, you have been found deficient ; you shall never receive those everlasting rewards, which should otherwise have been your inheritance. For it is as impossible to be given up to this world, 13. and the next, at the same time ; as it is to serve two masters of opposite dispositions.

14. These things were said in the hearing of the Pharisees, who being covetous, and wholly indisposed to such doctrines, endeavoured to turn them into ridicule.

15. But Jesus thus rebuked them : That strict observance, said he, of the ceremonies of the law, of which you boast, may give you credit among men ; but God knoweth your hearts. Wickedness, 16. under whatever sanctified appearance, is his abhorrence. From the time of John's preaching, the gospel is offered universally to 17. all mankind ; and the types and ceremonies of the law, are, at the 18. same time, abolished, and fulfilled. The morality also of the law is heightened, and improved ; and what Moses allowed, as in the case of divorce, for instance, for the hardness of your hearts, is now brought within a much stricter, and more refined law.

———Nimium vobis Romana propago

Visa potens, superi, propria hæc si dona fuissent.

Æn. VI. ver. 870.

Nihil esse proprium cuiquam.

Ter. And. Ac. IV.

———Propriæ telluris herum natura, neque illum

Nec me, nec quenquam statuit———

Hor. Sat. Lib. II.

12. *In that, which is another man's*—namely, in that, which is of uncertain possession ; and may be taken from you.

Jesus

Jefus having thus rebuked the hypocrify of the Pharifees, returned to the fubject, which they had interrupted; and, in the following parable, fhewed them the dreadful confequences of a voluptuous life, given up wholly to the pleasures of this world. The parable alfo tended to fhew the comparative happinefs of good men, tho in the midft of worldly diftreffs.

A certain rich man, faid he, enjoyed all the happinefs, and pleasures of this life. His drefs was the moft costly; and his table the moft fumptuous. In the mean time, a beggar, whofe name was Lazarus, lay at his gate, ftruggling with all the neceffities of nature; and wifhing in vain to fupply his hunger from the offals of the plentiful table within. To hunger was added the calamity of difeafe. —In procefs of time the beggar died; and was carried by angels into a ftate of happinefs. Soon after, the rich man alfo died: but while his body was depofited in the grave in all the fplendor of funeral pomp; his foul was conveyed into a place of torment. From hence cafting up his eyes, he faw Abraham afar off in the regions of happinefs; and Lazarus by his fide. With a lamentable cry he begged for mercy; requesting, that Lazarus might be fent to dip the tip of his finger only in water, and cool his tongue; for he was tormented in the midft of flames. But Abraham put him in mind of the voluptuous life he had led upon earth; and of the little ufe he had made of the bleffings, with which Providence had intrufted him.—He put him in mind alfo of the refignation, with which Lazarus had born his diftreffed circumftances; and fhewed him, that their different fituations after death were the confequences of their different lives upon earth.—He fhewed him laftly the impof-

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23. This is accommodated to a common opinion among the Jews, that Paradiſe, and Gehenna, were ſo ſituated, that it was eafy to fee from one into the other.

fibility of any connection between those two different states, in which Lazarus and he were now placed.

27. 28. Since that was impossible, the rich man next begged, that Abraham would send Lazarus to warn his brethren[†] against following his
29. bad example. Abraham told him, they had Moses and the prophets as constant monitors.

30. But he again urged, that if one went from the dead, they might repent.

31. To this Abraham finally answered, that God's ordinary means were fully sufficient for all mankind; and that if men were prejudiced, and hardened in their sins, they would not even be converted by a man sent from the dead.

C H A P.
XVII.

1. 2.

Jesus, on another occasion, instructing his disciples with regard to the great points of *giving*, and *taking* offence, thus spoke. Such is the nature of human things, that the world must abound with offences of various kinds. Men will be deluded, and drawn away by false opinions, and wicked practices. But notwithstanding all these things must happen in the course of human affairs; yet that is no excuse for those wicked persons, through whom they happen. He who seduces others to sin, shall have the most grievous of all
3. sins to answer for himself. Consider well therefore every action you do in this light; and be always fearful of corrupting the manners of others, by any wicked practices of your own.

Again, as to *taking offence*, be not rigid in exacting all the satisfaction, that may be due. Gently rebuke the offender; and if he

31. This very beautiful parable is told with all the circumstances of eastern imagery. The soul carried to heaven by angels—the gulph between—Lazarus's lying in Abraham's bosom, are all Jewish images; and have great beauty in description. The last circumstance is illustrated by a passage from Josephus: Θανοντας ημας Αβρααμ, και Ισαακ, και Ιακωβ υποδειξονται εις της κολπης αυτων.——The request of a man to be sent from the dead is well explained by Bp. Sherlock, Vol. III. Ser. 2.

make a concession, immediately forgive him. Nay, however frequent his offences may be; yet if his penitence continually follow them, let your heart be open to forgive. 4.

On another occasion the disciples begged Jesus to increase their faith. 5.

Jesus told them, it was a prayer, which all Christians ought to make. Faith, said he, like a grain sown in the ground, should always be of an increasing nature: and such a faith might obtain any thing from the throne of grace.—Only of one thing be assured, that when you have obtained this great Christian virtue, and all others, as far as you can; yet still you ought to have the most humble opinion of yourselves. When the servant does his duty, shall his Lord thank him? By no means. He has done only his duty.—So you, when you have attained what height of perfection you can, must still say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done merely what was our duty to do. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Jesus, after this, proceeding in his journey to Jerusalem, passed through Samaria, and Galilee. As he approached a village in those parts, he met ten lepers, who were excluded from their place of abode on account of their uncleanness†. These persons, knowing Jesus, stood at a distance, and begged with a loud voice, that he would have mercy on them. Jesus bade them go, and shew themselves to the priest. As they went, they felt themselves healed. On this, one of them, who was a Samaritan, impressed with a sense of gratitude, returned to Jesus; and falling down at his feet, glorified his power; and the goodness of God. Jesus inquiring after the other 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

† See the Levitical law.

17. 18. nine; and finding none of them had been awakened into a sense of
 19. gratitude, but this single stranger; commended his faith; and told him, it would lead him to a much higher salvation, than the cure of a bodily disease.

20. 21. Sometime after, the Pharisees asking Jesus, When the kingdom of the Messiah should come? he told them, it would never appear in the manner, in which they expected it, with worldly pomp, and ostentation.—The kingdom of the Messiah, said he, is established in the hearts of men.

22. Jesus took this opportunity to tell his disciples, that they must not hope to see a continuation of those peaceable days, which they
 23. now enjoyed; but must expect to meet with many calamities; and among other difficulties, must guard against the delusions of impostors. For tho the gospel, said he, shall hereafter be propagated with
 24. surprizing quickness; yet the Son of man must first suffer great indignity, and cruelty from the Jews. Then shall come on those
 25. calamitous times, which shall be as sudden, as they will be dreadful. As in the days of Noah, men were thoroughly engaged in all the
 26. 27. business of life, till the flood unexpectedly destroyed them—and as in the days of Lot, the inhabitants of Sodom were unconcerned,

18. The expression in the original is *σέσωκε σε*; to which I have ventured to give this interpretation. Commentators have generally referred his being saved to the *cure of the leprosy*.—But, in the first place, the word *σώξω* as often signifies to save from the *effect of sin*, as from any other danger. See Matt. i. 21.—And secondly, this leper was *already* cured of his bodily disease, as the others had been, without any mention of *faith*: which was sometimes, on other occasions, tho not often, the case.—So that one should suppose his *faith* was to save him from *something* from which he had not yet been saved.—As the disciples also had just been begging an increase of faith, this example came in very properly to shew, how it led from one degree to another—from the cure of a bodily disorder, to everlasting happiness.

21. *Εννο; υμων* may be translated *among you*: but the generality of commentators give it this more evangelical sense.

24. This verse is supposed by some to relate to the destruction of Jerusalem.

till

till the great event came on—so shall it be in that calamity, which is hanging over the Jewish nation. Let every man therefore, remembering the error of Lot's wife, take the most direct, and speedy means of escape.

But principally, added Jesus, let this sudden escape carry your thoughts still farther to those similar events of death, and judgment; which shall be equally unavoidable; and equally undistinguishing. A man's loss, and gain will not then be estimated on worldly principles; nor his security on worldly calculations.

But in these, said Jesus, and in all your other distresses, be fervent in prayer to God. Fervent prayer will always weigh with your heavenly Father.—On this head Jesus spoke the following parable.

In a certain city lived a corrupt judge, who regarded neither God, nor man. In the same city lived also an oppressed widow, who brought her complaint before him. But tho the justice of her suit had no weight with the judge; her assiduity moved him. This woman, and her cause, said he to himself, are matters of no concern to me; yet my own quiet is; and I will hear her case, merely to avoid her importunity.—If then an unjust judge, said

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31. 32.

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34. 35. 36.

C H A P.
XVIII.
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34. The passage from this verse, seems more applicable to the general judgment, than to the siege of Jerusalem. Indeed most commentators interpret it in this sense: (see the notes on Matt. xxiv. 31, and on Mark xiii. 32.) Of the last verse of this chapter I have given no explanation; because connected, at least, as it is, I do not clearly understand it. Dr. Clarke says, *Wherever the unbelieving Jews, and wicked men are, there also will the judgment of God follow them.*—Dr. Whitby says, *Wherever the Jews are, there also will the sword of the Romans, whose ensign is the eagle, be ready to devour them.* The reader may take which of these explanations he chuses: I like neither of them.—Perhaps indeed the expression, *where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together*, may be only, as some have interpreted it, a proverb, signifying, that *similar causes, will always produce similar effects*: so that when the disciples say, *Where Lord?* or *Of what destruction do you speak?* Jesus's answer might admit the following explanation: "*I spoke first of the destruction of Jerusalem; and afterwards led your attention to the 'last great day: for wickedness shall always both here, and hereafter produce misery.'*" For myself, I think this the best sense.

Jesus,

Jesus, will hear the petition of a sutor, on so vile a motive; shall not a righteous God attend to the prayers of his faithful servants? Tho he may not immediately grant their requests, he will always attend to their distresses; and sooner, or later, relieve them.—On this great occasion however, added Jesus, on which I now speak—the approaching ruin of the Jews—there are very few, whose faith shall make them the objects of God's mercy.

9. To this instruction, which Jesus had just given his disciples on *fervency of prayer*, he added the following parable, as an *exhortation to humility*; which he addressed to some of his hearers, whom he knew to have too high an opinion of themselves.

10. Two men, said he, happened to meet at the temple. The one
11. was a Pharisee; the other a publican. The former, full of spiritual
12. pride, and self-importance, professed his innocent life; and thanked
13. God for his superiority over such a wretch, as stood before him. My
14. fasts, said he, are frequent; my offerings to God, abundant.—
The publican, in the mean time, standing in a distant corner of
the temple; and scarce daring to lift his eyes to heaven, smote his
breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner!—And yet added
Jesus, this despised publican returned from the temple, with a
juster sense of his duty, than the boasting Pharisee: for self-exal-
tation is in the highest manner displeasing to God.

11. *The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself.* It should be translated, *The Pharisee stood by himself, and prayed thus*: that is, he would not deign to come near the publican, for fear of pollution. See Isa. lxxv. 5.

12. The tythes, on which the Pharisee valued himself, were the temple-offerings.

14. *Every one, says the text, that exalteth himself, shall be abased.* It is worth remarking, that our blessed Saviour repeats this maxim, almost in these very words, three several times. Matt. xxii. 12: and again Luke xiv. 11: and in many other places the same sentiment is expressed. From this let us judge of it's importance.

Jesus

Jefus inculcated humility alfo on another occafion. Some
 Jews, in the neighbourhood, bringing their children to him, de-
 fired he would blefs them. But the difciples, conceiving this
 to be an unfeafonable interruption, rebuked their forwardnefs.
 Jefus however ordering the children to be called; laid his hands
 upon them; and then turning to his followers, Thefe, faid he,
 are the true emblems of my difciples. He only, who has the
 innocence, and purity of a little child, is qualified to be a member
 of my kingdom.

15.

16. 17.

Soon after, a young man of fome diftinction, coming to Jefus,
 and accofting him by the name of *good mafter*, defired to be in-
 formed, how he fhould attain eternal life?—Jefus, obferving
 from his manner of addrefs, that he had acknowledged him to
 be the Meffiah; firft questioned him about the commandments;
 and finding, that he had a good account of himfelf to give on
 thefe points; told him, it was fo far well. But now, faid he, I
 muft put your faith to a trial. Sell what you have, and give it
 to the poor; and trust me for your reward in heaven.—This
 injunction decided the affair. The young man was very rich;
 and not expecting to be put to fuch a proof, abruptly retired.

18.

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23.

Jefus, on this, obferved the very great difficulty of a rich man's
 being properly difpofed to receive the gospel: and when his dif-
 ciples expreffed their concern at what he faid, he added, that he
 fpoke only of man unaffifted by divine grace. By God's grace,
 faid he, all the bad difpofitions of our hearts, and all the temp-
 tations of the world, may be conquered.

24. 25.

26.

27.

21. See the parallel place, Matt. xix. 16.

28. Peter could not help on this occasion reminding Jesus, in his zeal, that he, and his fellow-disciples had left all, and followed him.

29. 30. Jesus never gave self-exaltation the praise it demanded; but contented himself with saying, that no man gave up the things of this world for the sake of religion; who should not even in this life receive abundantly more comfort, than he could have received in possessing them; and in the world to come, everlasting happiness.

31. 32. 33. After this preparation, Jesus told his disciples, still more plainly, than he had yet done, that their present journey to Jerusalem should end in his being treated with every indignity, which his enemies could invent; and that finally, he should be put to death; but on the third day, he assured them, he should rise again.—
34. The disciples however, notwithstanding this plain language, had no clear conception of what he meant.

35. Jesus had now arrived near Jericho; where a blind man sitting
36. by the road-side, and hearing a multitude pass along, inquired
37. the occasion of it. Some of the croud telling him, that Jesus of
38. Nazareth was passing that way; he cried with a loud voice, and
calling him by the name of Jesus, the son of David, begged, he
39. would have mercy on him. The people rebuked his importunity;
40. but he still continued his cries, till Jesus, coming to the place,
41. ordered him to be brought to him; and asked him, what he wished
for? To this the blind man answered, Lord, that I may receive
42. my sight. Jesus immediately restoring him, said, his great faith
had procured that blessing for him. He then followed Jesus
43. with the rest of the people; and was joined by the whole croud,
in praising God for so wonderful a mercy.

Soon.

Soon after Jesus had left Jericho, a rich man, whose name was Zaccheus, a chief tax-gatherer, was greatly desirous to see him. But not being able, as he was a man of low stature, to satisfy his curiosity in the midst of a croud; he climbed into a tree, near the road.—Jesus coming to the place, looked up, and bad him come down; telling him, he should go with him to his house. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

Some of the Jews seeing Jesus there, took great offence at his freedom with a person of so notorious a life, as Zaccheus had been supposed to lead. The event however shewed, how unjustly they judged. For Zaccheus, on this intercourse with Jesus, became so intirely convinced of the wickedness of his past life; that he stood forth before all the people there assembled, and made open confession of his sins; declaring, that for the future, he intended to lead a new life. The oppressions he had been guilty of, he would recompence four-fold; and to make *amends*, where he could not make *restitution*, he would give half of what he possessed to the poor.—Jesus told him, that his repentance, and faith should secure to him the gracious promises made to Abraham, his father. And then turning to his adversaries, he added, You see the end of the Son of man's coming upon earth: he came to save that which was lost. 9. 10.

Jesus by this time, drawing near Jerusalem; and observing that many of those, who followed him, had entertained thoughts of his intending, on his arrival there, to attempt some temporal deliverance, spoke the following parable to shew them the nature of his kingdom—that it was intirely of a spiritual kind—that all mankind were to pass first through a state of trial—and that afterwards, at the consummation of all things, he should come in his glory, and call them to an account, before they passed into a state of happiness, or of misery. 11.

12. A certain prince, said he, inheriting a kingdom, went to receive
 13. his title to it from his principal lord; and calling his servants,
 he gave them money, which he ordered them to improve against
 14. his return. The generality of the people, in the mean time, taking
 offence at him, rejected his government.

15. Having succeeded in his design, he returned; and called his
 16. several servants before him. The first had improved the single
 17. pound, he had received, to ten. At this his lord expressing his
 18. satisfaction, gave him the command of ten cities. A second, who
 19. 20. had made only half the improvement, received only half the re-
 ward. But at length came one, who brought with him the ori-
 21. ginal sum, wrapped up in a napkin, which he had put to no use,
 telling his lord, that knowing his austerity, he was afraid, and
 had brought back the money just as he had received it.

22. Out of your own mouth, returned his lord, will I judge you.
 23. If you knew my disposition to be such, why did you not endeavour
 24. to procure my favour by putting my money to use? Then turning
 to those, who stood near him, Take the pound, said he, from
 him, who has not used it; and give it to him, that hath ten
 26. pounds. For he, who hath improved properly what he had, shall
 receive more, and more; while he, who hath neglected his trust,
 however small, shall lose that little, which he already possessed.
 27. And as for those, who rejected my government, let them suffer
 the punishment their rebellion deserves.

28. 29. 30. Jesus having now arrived at the mount of Olives, near Bethany,
 and Bethphage, sent two of his disciples into one of those villages;

12. Our Saviour seems here to have had in view the manner, in which Herod, Archilaus, and other princes, went to Rome, to receive their several titles from Cæsar.

25. I have left out this verse; as it is thought to be an interpolation; and is not found in many of the best MSS. See Bp. Pearce in loc.

where he told them, they should find an ass's colt; which he ordered them to bring to him; instructing them what to say to the owner of it, if they met with any difficulty. Every thing happening as Jesus had said, they brought the colt, and laying their cloaths upon it, set him thereon. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35.

In this humble triumph he descended the mount of Olives towards Jerusalem; the multitude spreading flowers, and garments before him; praising God for all the mighty works he had done; and crying, Blessed is the king, that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace and glory attend him! 36. 37. 38.

It happened, that some of the Pharisees being among the croud, took great offence at their rejoicing; and desired Jesus to check their clamour. But he gave them to understand, that it was a very proper occasion for the people to testify their joy: and that if these should be checked, others would rise up to celebrate this triumph. 39. 40.

As Jesus descended the mount of Olives, he had a view of the whole city of Jerusalem, spread in all its splendor before him. The recollection of its approaching destruction moved him with compassion. He stood over it, and wept; lamenting its hardened, impenitent state, which prevented every intention of mercy. The days, said he, are coming, when thine enemies shall surround thee; and straiten thee on every side; and lay thee level with the ground—blind as thou art to all the approaching signs of thy dissolution. 41. 42. 43. 44.

38. See a note on Matt. xxi. 11.

40. The passage in the original, *The stones would immediately cry out*; is a strong figurative expression; conveying, I think, the sense I have given.

43. With what exact particularity this prophecy was fulfilled, Josephus informs us. To encompass the city with a wall was thought an impracticable work. Titus however, animating his soldiers, completed it, and literally kept the inhabitants in on every side.

45. Jesus then entering the city, alighted at the temple: and being greatly offended at finding the courts of the Gentiles filled like a
 46. market, with buyers, and sellers, he drove them all out; saying, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.

47. After this, Jesus continued teaching in the temple, during the day; and in the evening retired to Bethany.

48. In the mean time the chief priests, and Scribes, assembling together, consulted how they might destroy him. But not daring to attack him openly, because of the people, who held him in such reverence; they attempted to get matter of accusation against him from his discourses.

CHAP.
XX.

1.

2. With this view, they desired, he would inform them, by what authority he had entered the city in triumph, and driven the traders out of the temple?

3. Jesus told them, he would answer their question by asking them
 4. another. What think you, said he, of the baptism of John? Was it of divine, or of human authority?

5. This question included an answer: for whatever the authority of John was, such also was the authority of Jesus. The Scribes saw the difficulty; and were confounded with it. If, said they among themselves, we shall allow the authority of John to be *divine*, we
 6. can give no reason, why we do not believe in Jesus. But if we call it *human*, we shall draw upon ourselves the resentment of the
 7. people; who are all persuaded, that John was a prophet. They were reduced to the necessity therefore of saying, they could not

46. Isa. lvi. 7. and Jerem. vii. 11. See also the parallel place in Matthew.

tell. Neither then, said Jesus, shall I tell you, by what authority I do these things. 8.

He then shewed them, in a very severe parable, that God would certainly punish them in the end, for rejecting all his calls of mercy; and would adopt the Gentiles in their room. 9.

A certain man, said he, planted a vineyard; and being about to take a journey, let it out to husbandmen. At the season, he sent a servant to demand the fruits: but the husbandmen treated him roughly, and refused his demand. After him he sent other servants; but with the same success. At length he determined to send his son; to whom he doubted not they would pay respect. On the contrary, when they saw him, imagining that by his death the inheritance should be theirs, they fell upon him, and killed him. What therefore, said he, shall the lord of the vineyard do to those wicked husbandmen? He will certainly come with power, and destroy them; and call in other labourers into his vineyard, who shall give him the fruits in their season. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

From the answer which the chief priests, and Scribes made to Jesus, it was plain, they understood the meaning of the parable.

Jesus then asked them, how they understood that passage in the psalmist, *The stone which the builders rejected, is become the head-stone of the corner?* thus pointing out to them, that as the corner-stone united the two sides of a building together, so should Christ unite Jews, and Gentiles in one church—at the same time shewing them, that the prophet considered *them* as the builders, who rejected that stone. 17.

He then added, that he, who stumbled at it, should be injured: but those impenitent people, on whom it should fall, should be ground to powder. 18.

9. See a note on Matt. xxi. 33.

19. 20. The chief-priests however, angry as they were, durst attempt nothing openly against him. All they attempted, was, to insnare him in his discourse: and for this purpose they employed artful men to circumvent him.

It was, at that time, a great question among the Jews, whether, as a free people by their descent from Abraham, they ought to acknowledge any foreign prince by paying tribute to him?

21. 22. This question some, who were employed by the chief-priests, brought to Jesus; feigning themselves, at the same time, to be intirely devoted to his opinion, for which they had the greatest reverence. The difficulty of the question lay in making Jesus offend either the Jews on one hand; or the Romans on the other.

23. 24. Jesus knowing their design, bad them shew him the tribute-money. On their producing a Roman coin, which was current money among the Jews; he asked them, Whose image, and inscription it bore? They answered, Cæsar's.

25. Give then to Cæsar, said Jesus, the things that are Cæsar's;
26. and to God, the things that are God's. By an answer so full of wisdom, his enemies were disconcerted, and retired in silence.

27. After them came a body of Sadduces. This sect denied a future state: and brought a question to Jesus, as they imagined, of peculiar difficulty. Master, said they, Moses commands, that if a man
28. die without children, his brother shall take his wife, and preserve
29. 30. 31. the family. Now we have an instance of seven brethren, who all,
32. one after another, in obedience to this law, married the same woman.
33. We desire to learn therefore, if there be a future state, which of the seven brethren shall hereafter claim the woman?

34. In answer to this question, Jesus first shewed them the impropriety of judging of the next world by the affairs of this. In this
35. 36. 37. world, said he, marriage is necessary: but a state of immortality renders

renders a succession of inhabitants needless.—And as to your principal question, he added, if you believe the scriptures, you must also believe in a future state. For you cannot suppose, that God, who styles himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; 38. would style himself the God of persons, who did not exist.

This drew from some of the Scribes, who were of a party opposite to that of the Sadducees, great commendation. And from this 39. time, none of his opposers took the courage to ask him any further 40. questions.

Jesus then asked them a question. How is Christ, said he, 41. David's son? David plainly acknowledges him his superior, saying, 42. 43. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make* 44. *thine enemies thy foot-stool.*

To this question receiving no answer, he turned to the 45. people, and said; Avoid that desire of superiority, that religious 46. pomp, and hypocritical solemnity, to which you see the Scribes addicted. For a pretence they make long prayers; while they are guilty of every kind of extortion. But their hypocrisy only increases their guilt.

As Jesus was leaving the temple, he observed many people throwing their offerings into the treasury: and among them a poor widow, who threw in a mere trifle. But even that trifle, Jesus observed to his disciples, was more acceptable in the sight of God, than many of the richest offerings: for God did not rate a charitable action by the greatness of the gift; but by the disposition of the giver.

C H A P.
XXI.

1. 2.

3.

4.

38. By a slight alteration in the text, the words, *for all live unto him*, are changed into, *all, who live, are his*; which makes the argument much firmer. See Bowyer's conjec.

1. See Mark xii. 4.

4. See Mark xii. 44.

5. Some of the disciples afterwards observing the great splendor,
 6. with which the temple was adorned; and particularly the amazing
 bulk of many of the stones; Jesus told them, that the days were
 approaching, when not one stone, in all that building, should
 be left upon another.

7. This led the disciples to enquire into the time of this event;
 and to ask, what sign should precede it?

8. In the first place, said Jesus, take care, that you be not deceived
 by any pretended deliverers, many of which shall arise under the
 9. 10. 11. title of Messiahs. But, instead of any deliverance, things shall
 come to great extremity. You shall hear of commotions, wars,
 famines, and every kind of distress. Be not however terrified: these
 12. things must needs happen. Nay even before these general cala-
 mities arise, you must experience great opposition, and persecution
 13. for the sake of the truth: but it will be the more established through
 14. your persevering testimony.

Nor be solicitous on these trying occasions, how you shall
 15. answer your opposers. The Spirit of God shall direct you. Only
 16. 17. settle this well in your minds, that the opposition you must meet
 with, shall be very great. The prejudices of men shall over-power
 their natural affections. You shall be hated of the world; and
 18. 19. many of you even put to death. But let it be the great ground
 of your resignation, that you shall always be under the protection
 of God.

5. *How it was adorned with gifts.* Tacitus (Hist. v. 8.) speaks of it's extraordinary wealth.

18. Bp. Pearce, and others explain this verse as intimating, that they should be secure from the mischiefs of the Jewish war. This does not seem satisfactory. It seems rather to be a proverbial expression intimating not any particular deliverance; but that they should always be safe under the protection of God. Many of them suffered martyrdom; but still this did not annihilate the promise.

When

When Jerusalem shall be surrounded by a heathen army, then know, that it's destruction approacheth. Then let every one take the prudent means of escape; and pray to God to assist his flight. For among all the instances of ruin, and destruction, that ever happened in the world, this surely shall be the greatest.

Nor only shall the city of Jerusalem be destroyed; but the whole Jewish government shall be dissolved; and the Jews shall become a standing monument of the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom; and a confirmation of the truth of my promises.—As surely therefore as you judge of the coming of summer by the budding of the leaves; so surely may you judge of the approach of these events, by the signs I have given you. Heaven and earth are not more stedfast, and established. Even this generation shall see them fulfilled.

But to improve these great events to the utmost, let them carry your eyes forwards to those *similar* events of *death*, and *judgment*. Sit loose to the things of this world; and be always ready to receive your heavenly Father's call; which may be as sudden and unexpected, as the event I have been declaring: and let it be your constant prayer, that you may be found worthy, at the last day, to stand before the Son of man.

Thus Jesus continued preaching in the temple, during the day, where he was always attended by great crouds of people; and at night he retired to the mount of Olives.

In the mean time, the Scribes, and chief priests were eagerly bent on putting him to death: but they feared to make any open attempt,

CHAP.
XXII.
1. 2.

24. *They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive:* Luke is here more full than the other evangelists. In confirmation of this passage, we are assured by Josephus, that eleven hundred thousand Jews were destroyed by the sword, and near a hundred thousand taken prisoners.

during the passover ; as the people universally had him in such esteem.

3. While they held conferences on this subject, it fell out, that Judas
 4. 5. 6. Iscariot, who had now resolved on the design of betraying his master,
 went to them, and offered his services to this purpose. So unexpected
 an offer greatly pleased them, as it answered all their ends ;
 Judas undertaking, for a sum of money, to betray him into their
 hands, at a time, when the multitude could have no intimation of
 their intention.

7. 8. 9. While this design was carrying on, Jesus had retired with his
 disciples to the mount of Olives ; from whence he sent two of them
 into the city, to provide a place, where he might eat the passover.
 10. As you enter the city, said he, you shall see a man carrying a pitcher
 11. of water ; follow him, and inquire at the house he enters, for the
 12. guest-chamber ; and the master of it will immediately shew you a
 13. proper room. This was accordingly done, and the passover made
 ready.

14. 15. As Jesus sat down, with his disciples, he told them, he had
 16. greatly desired to eat this last passover with them ; as it was a type,
 17. now about to be fulfilled. He wished also, he said, to drink this
 18. last paschal cup with them ; which he gave among them telling
 them, that type also was now compleated, and should thence forward
 cease.

19. In the room of these paschal rites Jesus instituted his last supper.
 He took bread, and breaking it, delivered it among them, saying,
 20. Eat this in remembrance of my death. Then taking the cup, he

16. *Until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*—that is, until the type be fulfilled on the establishment of the gospel.

17. St. Matthew mentions the bread, before the cup. We may conclude therefore it was among matters of indifference, which was taken first.

20. None of the evangelists mentions so plainly, as St. Luke does, the substitution of the sacramental supper in the room of the passover.

ordered them to drink it likewise in the same solemn manner, in remembrance of his blood, which was shed for the sins of men.

The Son of man, said he, must suffer, as hath been foretold. But woe to that person, by whom he is betrayed—and yet that person is now among you. 21. 22.

This drew on a general inquiry round the table: yet so slightly were the disciples affected, on the whole; and so little did they understand the nature, and intention of Jesus's passion; or the high offence, about which he was inquiring, that they soon after entered into a dispute with some warmth upon their several pretensions to greatness, when the Messiah's kingdom should be established. 23. 24.

Jesus in order to dispel these undue prejudices, reminded them of the difference between his kingdom, and the kingdoms of this world. They who preside over the kingdoms of this world, said he, exercise unbounded power under gracious titles. But among you, let every one, who wishes to be exalted, seek his exaltation from humility. Imitate the example, which I set you; and as you have followed me through all my labours, and temptations on earth; so shall you be members of my spiritual kingdom; and receive hereafter its blessed distinctions.—But in the mean time you must expect to undergo great trials, and sufferings. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31.

25. *Called benefactors.* Antiochus, king of Syria, took the title of *Euergetes*, or benefactor: so did Demetrius, and some others.

30. There is no occasion, I think to consider the phrase, *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, in a literal sense. It is perhaps better to consider it only, as a lofty eastern expression. See a note on Matt. xix. 28.

31. The whole of this speech *seems* to be addressed to Peter; yet the former part of it, contained in verse thirty-one, includes all the disciples. The word in the original, is, *ὅσα*; not *οἱ*.

Then

32. Then addressing himself to Peter, he added, that he had particularly prayed for him: and bad him, when his faith was established, comfort each weaker Christian.

33. Peter with great vehemence answered his master, that he was ready to suffer any extremity for his sake.

34. But Jesus checked his forwardness by telling him, that the cock should not crow that night, till he had thrice denied him.

35. Jesus then thought it proper to remind his disciples again of the very great trials that were approaching. When I sent you out, said he, to preach the gospel; all was smooth, and easy before you.

36. 37. But now you must arm yourselves against great persecution. For every thing that I have told you of my sufferings, which shall be the beginning of yours, shall now be speedily accomplished.

38. The disciples mistaking his meaning, as if he wished them to arm literally in his defence; produced two swords. But Jesus checked their mistake.

39. From the paschal supper, he retired with his disciples to the
40. mount of Olives; and bidding them pray to God to assist them in
41. this great approaching trial; he withdrew a few paces; and
42. kneeling down, *Father*, said he, *if thou be willing, remove this cup*
43. 44. *from me—nevertheless, not my will; but thine be done.* As he thus

38. We are rather surprized at finding two swords among them: but the road from Galilee might be infested with robbers, (many of the roads about Jerusalem, we know, were,) and these two swords might probably be carried by way of defence. One of these swords, it afterwards appears, was Peter's. John xviii. 10. Or perhaps they carried these two swords, as a guard against wild beasts, which also infested that country.

44. There are instances of bloody sweats arising from agonizing conflicts. Dr. Mead in his Med. fac. cap. xiii. says, *Contingere interdum poros ex multo, ant fervido spiritu, usque adeo dilatari, ut etiam exeat sanguis per eos, fiatque sudor sanguineus.*—And in Thuanus's history, we have an instance: A gentleman, says he, under the apprehension of being hanged—*tam indignæ mortis vehementi metu adeo concussus animo fuisse, ut sanguineum sudorem toto corpore funderet.* Thuan. Hist. Lib. II.

prayed

prayed earnestly, he fell into an agony, and drops of sweat like blood, fell from him; and there appeared angels from heaven strengthening him. When he rose from prayer, he returned to his disciples; and finding them asleep, he rebuked them for their unconcern in an hour of such distress.

While he was thus speaking, a multitude of armed men appeared, with Judas at their head, who went up to Jesus, and saluted him. Jesus mildly expostulated with him for so base an act: while the disciples in the mean time preparing to defend their master, one of them drew a sword, and wounded a servant of the high-priest. But Jesus turning to them, forbade this hostile appearance; and healed the man. He then asked the officers, who came to apprehend him, what occasion there was for all that caution, and secrecy? ^{50. 51.} ^{52.} ^{53.} I have been daily, said he, teaching in the temple, and no man made any attempt against me—But this is the hour, in which the powers of darkness are suffered to prevail.

From the mount of Olives, the soldiers carried Jesus to the high-priest's palace; where a council of the principal Jews assembled to examine him.

In the mean time, Peter followed at a distance; and entering the palace with the croud, sat down in the hall, among the servants, at the fire. While he was there, three persons, one after another, challenged him as belonging to Jesus. But he denied each time; ^{55.} ^{56. 57. 58.} ^{59. 60.} declaring with great vehemence, that he knew him not.

Soon after the cock crew; and Jesus, who was in the same room, turning round, gave Peter a look, which brought him at once to

54. Jesus was now in the hands of the Roman soldiers. See a note on John xviii. 12.

himself.

62. himself. He retired to a private place; and poured out his distress in a flood of tears.

63. 64. 65. While this passed, they who guarded Jesus, treated him with every indignity; blinding his eyes, striking him on the face, and bidding him discover who struck him.

66. About midnight the chief priests, and Scribes, being all assembled, Jesus was brought before them, and asked, whether he professed himself to be the Messiah?

69. Jesus told them, that as nothing he could say to them at present, would have any effect, he must refer them to that future time, when they should see an awful proof of his power.

70. They all immediately considered this as implying his being the Son of God: and upon their urging him, he declared it plainly.

71. On this they all cried out, What further need have we of witness? We ourselves can now testify his blasphemy.

CHAP.
XXIII.

1. 2.

From the palace therefore of the high-priest, they immediately carried him before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; accusing him of setting up pretensions to royalty, and exciting the people against the government.

3. Pilate accordingly asked him, whether he had any pretensions to be king of the Jews? To this Jesus answered, that his pretensions were merely in a spiritual sense: not in that, in which they accused him.

4. A very short examination convinced the Roman governor of the slightness of the accusation against him. He told the chief

66. The text says, *as soon as it was day*: that is according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, as soon as midnight was passed.

priests therefore, that he saw nothing criminal in the person, they had brought before him.

This only produced more eagerness, on their part. In vehement language they assured Pilate, that he had stirred up the people to sedition, through the whole country, from Galilee, even to Jerusalem. 5.

Pilate hearing the name of Galilee, asked, whether Jesus were a Galilean? and finding that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him, in compliment, to that prince; who happened to be at that time in Jerusalem. 6. 7.

Herod was glad of an opportunity, which he had long wished for, of satisfying his curiosity with regard to Jesus; of whom he had so frequently heard. He asked him many questions therefore; and hoped to have seen some miracles. But Jesus did not satisfy his curiosity; nor made any answers to the vehement accusations of the chief priests. Herod therefore, thus disappointed, treated Jesus, in return, with great contempt; and sent him back to Pilate.—The civility however of Pilate, on this occasion, opened a friendly intercourse between him, and Herod, which had not before subsisted. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

Pilate therefore sitting again in judgment, told the chief priests, that as both king Herod, and he, had examined Jesus, and found no proof of that guilt, which they had laid to his charge; he should after some slight punishment, dismiss him. This he proposed to do, agreeably to an annual custom they claimed, of having some capital offender released at the passover. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17.

7. This was Herod Antipas, who had beheaded John. He was son of Herod the great, who destroyed the children; and uncle to Herod Agrippa, who beheaded James, and *was eaten of worms*. Acts xii. He was great uncle to that Agrippa, before whom Paul pleaded.

18. This proposal however displeased them; and as they claimed an
 19. option in the case, they all cried out, desiring, that a criminal,
 named Barabbas, who had lately been committed to prison for
 sedition, and murder, might be released.
20. Pilate made a second effort to save Jesus; but what he said was
 21. drowned in a general cry, Away with him,—Away with him—
 Crucify him.
22. 23. 24. After a third attempt to save him, Pilate at length gave way;
 25. and releasing Barabbas, passed sentence on Jesus.
26. On this they led him away immediately to crucify him; obliging
 one Simon, a Cyrenian, whom they met, and probably supposed
 to be his disciple, to bear his cross.
27. By this time many people from the city had joined the Roman
 guard, who were carrying Jesus to execution. Among them were
 many women, who followed with great lamentation.
28. 29. 30. Jesus turning to them, bad them not weep for him; but for
 themselves, and their children; Calamities, said he, are coming on
 this devoted place, beyond any thing of former times: and if the
 31. righteous shall not escape the wicked, what will be the end of the
 wicked themselves?
32. 33. The chief priests had contrived, with a view to fix the greater
 disgrace on Jesus, to execute two malefactors at the same time.

26. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 32.

27. The chief priests were now under no apprehension of a rescue, as Jesus was in the hands of the Romans.

30. The expressions in this, and the foregoing verse, seem only strong figures to denote great calamities. *To call on the mountains to fall on them*, was proverbial.

31. This verse is obscure: but we are led, I think, to the sense I have given, from observing, that in many parts of scripture, *green trees* represent *good men*; and *dry trees*, *bad*. See Ps. i. 3. Ps. v. 2. 10. Hos. xiv. 8. Jer. xvii. 8. Job xv. 32. Ezech. xx. 17. It was also proverbial among the Jews, *that two dry sticks would burn a green one*—that is two bad men would corrupt a good one.

With these therefore he was led to a place, called Calvary; where he was crucified between them. *Father, forgive them, said Jesus, looking mildly on his executioners, they know not what they do.* 34. 35. 36. 37.

The soldiers having finished their work, sat down to divide his garments: while the chief priests, and their party, derided him; crying, *He saved others, let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God.*

The soldiers then offered him vinegar in derision; and took up their favorite idea of ridicule, *If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.*

An inscription also was placed over him, in different languages, 38. *This is the king of the Jews.*

Even one of the thieves, who were crucified with him, reviled him; crying out, *If thou be Christ, save thyself, and us.* 39.

But the other, who was a person of a different disposition, rebuked his companion; putting him in mind of his own wretched state—of that guilt, which had deservedly drawn upon them their sufferings—and of the innocence of the holy person, who suffered with them. Then turning to Jesus, he said, *Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.* Jesus answered, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* 40. 41. 42. 43.

43. It is probable, that the penitent thief might have heard of Jesus before, and might have received favourable impressions of him; tho he now probably first saw him. At this awful instant he seems to have been so struck with the greatness, and majesty of his Saviour, then in the act of dying for the sins of the world, that he acknowledged him to be the Messiah; and in a thorough sense of his own wickedness, professed his full faith and trust in his mercies.—He is therefore exactly in the condition of those, who have first had the opportunity of embracing the gospel; and had his sins forgiven, on the plain, and common conditions, which it offers.—This case therefore has no relation to a death-bed repentance, when people have long enjoyed the opportunities of hearing the gospel, and have neglected them.

18. This proposal however displeased them; and as they claimed an
 19. option in the case, they all cried out, desiring, that a criminal,
 named Barabbas, who had lately been committed to prison for
 sedition, and murder, might be released.

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 25. and releasing Barabbas, passed sentence on Jesus.

26. On this they led him away immediately to crucify him; obliging
 one Simon, a Cyrenian, whom they met, and probably supposed
 to be his disciple, to bear his cross.

27. By this time many people from the city had joined the Roman
 guard, who were carrying Jesus to execution. Among them were
 many women, who followed with great lamentation.

28. 29. 30. Jesus turning to them, bade them not weep for him; but for
 themselves, and their children; Calamities, said he, are coming on
 this devoted place, beyond any thing of former times: and if the
 31. righteous shall not escape the wicked, what will be the end of the
 wicked themselves?

32. 33. The chief priests had contrived, with a view to fix the greater
 disgrace on Jesus, to execute two malefactors at the same time.

26. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 32.

27. The chief priests were now under no apprehension of a rescue, as Jesus was in the hands of the Romans.

30. The expressions in this, and the foregoing verse, seem only strong figures to denote great calamities. *To call on the mountains to fall on them*, was proverbial.

31. This verse is obscure: but we are led, I think, to the sense I have given, from observing, that in many parts of scripture, *green trees* represent *good men*; and *dry trees*, *bad*. See Ps. i. 3. Ps. v. 2. 10. Hos. xiv. 8. Jer. xvii. 8. Job xv. 32. Ezech. xx. 17. It was also proverbial among the Jews, *that two dry sticks would burn a green one*—that is two bad men would corrupt a good one.

With these therefore he was led to a place, called Calvary; where he was crucified between them. *Father, forgive them, said Jesus, looking mildly on his executioners, they know not what they do.* 34. 35. 36. 37.

The soldiers having finished their work, sat down to divide his garments: while the chief priests, and their party, derided him; crying, *He saved others, let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God.*

The soldiers then offered him vinegar in derision; and took up their favorite idea of ridicule, *If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.*

An inscription also was placed over him, in different languages, 38. *This is the king of the Jews.*

Even one of the thieves, who were crucified with him, reviled him; crying out, *If thou be Christ, save thyself, and us.* 39.

But the other, who was a person of a different disposition, rebuked his companion; putting him in mind of his own wretched state—of that guilt, which had deservedly drawn upon them their sufferings—and of the innocence of the holy person, who suffered with them. Then turning to Jesus, he said, *Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.* Jesus answered, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* 40. 41. 42. 43.

43. It is probable, that the penitent thief might have heard of Jesus before, and might have received favourable impressions of him; tho he now probably first saw him. At this awful instant he seems to have been so struck with the greatness, and majesty of his Saviour, then in the act of dying for the sins of the world, that he acknowledged him to be the Messiah; and in a thorough sense of his own wickedness, professed his full faith and trust in his mercies.—He is therefore exactly in the condition of those, who have first had the opportunity of embracing the gospel; and had his sins forgiven, on the plain, and common conditions, which it offers.—This case therefore has no relation to a death-bed repentance, when people have long enjoyed the opportunities of hearing the gospel, and have neglected them.

44. It was about nine in the morning, when Jesus was nailed to
 45. the cross; and about twelve, a supernatural darkness coming on,
 threw an awful gloom over the whole scene. About three, the
 veil of the temple was rent in two parts; by which was figured,
 that all distinction between Jew, and Gentile was now over.

46. At the same instant Jesus cried with a loud voice; and soon
 afterwards saying *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, ex-
 pired.

47. 48. 49. Great agitation seized all, who were present on this wonderful
 occasion. The women, who had attended Jesus from Galilee,
 stood afar off in silent sorrow. The people, who had been drawn
 together by so uncommon a spectacle, astonished beyond utterance,
 smote their breasts, and retired. While the Roman officer, who
 attended the execution, seeing the many amazing circumstances,
 which had accompanied this great event, cried out with terror,
 Certainly this was a righteous man.

50. 51. In the evening, a person of consequence among the Jews, whose
 name was Joseph, of the city of Arimathea, who had never con-
 52. sented to the death of Jesus; but was in his heart inclined to him, as
 the promised Messiah, went to Pilate, and begged the body; which
 he wrapped in fine linnen, and laid in a new sepulchre of his own,
 53. which had been hewn out of a rock. Nothing more could be
 54. done that evening, as it grew late; and the sabbath approached.

46. Matthew, and Mark mention the words which Jesus said, when he cried with a loud voice, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Luke only testifies, that he did cry out; and then gives his last, dying expression.

The women also, who had attended Jesus to the cross, had the same pious intention which Joseph had, of embalming the body; and having prepared spices: came the next day after the sabbath, very early in the morning, for that purpose. But on their arrival at the place, they found the stone rolled away, and the body gone.

55. 56.
C H A P.
XXIV.
1. 2. 3.

While they were under the surprize naturally raised by such a circumstance, they were astonished at the appearance of two angels, standing near them in bright cloathing; who gently quieting their fears, asked them, Why they sought the living among the dead? The angels then told them, their Saviour was not there; but was risen; and reminded them of what Jesus himself had said in Galilee—that he should be delivered into the hands of sinners; and be put to death, and rise again the third day.

This they soon recollected; and leaving the sepulchre, went to inform the disciples. But on them their relation had no effect. Peter however, to obtain what proof he could, ran immediately to the place; where he found the linen cloaths lying folded up, and the body gone; which began to awaken his faith.

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14. 15. 16.
17.

It happened, the same day, that two of the disciples were walking to a village, called Emmaus; about six, or seven miles from Jerusalem: and as they were talking of what they had heard, a stranger joined them; and asked the cause of that dejection, which appeared in their looks, and discourse?

To this one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered, That he imagined a mere passenger through Jerusalem must have heard of the wonderful things, which had just happened there.

18.

4. In our translation it is rendered in *shining garments*: in the original it is *in garments streaming out light*.

18. Cleopas is supposed to be the same as Alpheas the father of James the less, and Judas.

19. 20. 21. The stranger asked, What things he meant ?
 22. 23. 24. They then told him of Jesus, the great prophet of Nazareth——of their expectations, that he should have delivered Israel——of their disappointment in his death——and lastly of the wonderful story of his resurrection from the dead ; which had been attested by some people of their acquaintance, on very probable grounds.
25. 26. The stranger then, assuming an air of authority, chid their incredulity in matters so plainly pointed out by the prophets, as the death of Christ, and his glorious exaltation after it.—He then
27. began with Moses ; and touched cursorily on all the prophecies, which related to the Messiah.
28. By this time they drew near the village ; and the stranger ap-
 29. peared, as if he meant to go farther. But they, delighted with his conversation, urged the lateness of the evening ; and prevailed on him to accompany them into the house.
30. As they sat down to meat, he took bread, and giving thanks, brake it, and gave it to them.
31. This action opened their eyes ; and they knew him to be their Lord, and master. But as their joy was ready to burst out, he vanished from their sight.
32. Then comparing together their sentiments on the road ; and recollecting the authority, and wisdom, with which he had explained the scriptures, they were astonished, how it was possible for them not to have known him before.
33. That they might not delay the communication of this great event, they returned that night to Jerusalem ; and going to the

25. Mr. Collins pretends to found his doubts on the resurrection on the little evidence it afforded, even to those who were on the spot. If he had acted consistently, he should next have been convinced of the truth of it, from their caution in believing it, and from their being convinced at last——The word *αἰσχροί*, which is translated *fools*, means *thoughtless, inconsiderate, inattentive*, or some equivalent expression.

eleven apostles, they found that Peter had been communicating 34.
to them an account of his having seen Jesus since his resurrection.
To Peter's evidence they added theirs; and gave a recital of all 35.
the circumstances of their walk to Emmaus.

While they were thus speaking, Jesus himself stood among 36.
them; and said, in his usual mode of salutation, Peace be unto
you!

At first they were alarmed, and affrighted, supposing, they had 37.
seen a spirit. But Jesus soon quieted their fears; asking them, 38. 39.
why they were afraid? Behold, said he, my hands, and my
feet. It is I myself. Touch me, and be convinced. A spirit
hath not flesh and bones, as you see me have.

He then shewed them the prints of the nails on his hands, and 40. 41. 42.
feet. And to assure them, in a still stronger manner, that he was 43.
cloathed with a real body, he took food, and eat.

Thus, said he, you see the great chain of prophecy, which 44. 45. 46.
I so often mentioned to you, while we conversed familiarly together,
is now complet. Christ hath suffered; and hath risen from the
dead.

These great points Jesus set before them in so strong a manner,
that they became more enlightened, than they had ever been.

34. Our Saviour's appearing to St. Peter, before he appeared to any of the other disciples, is mentioned by St. Paul 1 Cor. xv. 5. *He was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve.*

43. Our Saviour's eating, after his resurrection, seems a great difficulty. We have also similar instances of angels, which occur in the old testament. Do the bodies of glorified spirits perform animal functions? Or, is the carnal body assumed in this world; and deposited in the next?—transmuted, as it were, from spiritual to carnal, and from carnal to spiritual, according to its situation?—We have not however much to do with difficulties of this kind. From what hath been explained to us, we have ground sufficient to make us acquiesce with patience in the ignorance of such things, as have not been explained.

44. The Jews divided their scriptures into three parts—the *law*, the *prophets*, and the *hagiographa*. At the head of this last division stood the *psalms*, which therefore denominated the whole.

47. 48. He then added, that they were the appointed witnesses to the world of all these things; and that, through their ministry, repentance, and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, from Jerusalem, where they should begin their ministerial office. He concluded with ordering them to wait in that city, till they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; which should enable them to perform the great work, to which they had been appointed.

50. He then led them out to the mount of Olives, near Bethany;
 51. where laying his hands upon them, and blessing them, he was
 52. parted from them; and ascended visibly to heaven. They followed him with their eyes, in faith, and hope, as he ascended; and having worshipped him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy;
 53. praising God daily in the temple for all his wonderful works; and waiting, with holy hope, for the completion of their master's promise.

50. There is some confusion in the accounts, which the several evangelists give us of the scene of our Saviour's actions, after his resurrection. That he met his disciples in Galilee, is very plain; and it appears from this passage, that he afterwards returned into Judea. We are told the same thing also in Acts xiii. 31.

53. There is something peculiarly grand, and sublime, I think, in St. Luke's account of our Saviour's ascension, from the 44th verse to the end.

END OF THE GOSPEL BY ST. LUKE.

P R E F A C E
T O
S T. J O H N ' s G O S P E L.

ST. JOHN is supposed to have lived in Judea, till Titus laid siege to Jerusalem. On the foresight of that great event, he retired to Ephesus; where he continued, till the reign of Domitian. By this prince, in the time of a general persecution, he was banished to Patmos, an island in the Ægean sea. But, in the succeeding year, on the death of Domitian, he returned to Ephesus; where he lived till near the age of an hundred years.

Some interpreters suppose, as hath been observed, that he wrote his gospel in the decline of life—that he had seen the other gospels; and added his own as a supplement. Others imagine, that he wrote it with an immediate intention to oppose some leading heresies of the times: and it is probable from the great stress, which he every where lays on the divinity of Christ, that he had at least this in his view; tho the first supposition of his adding a supplement to the other evangelists might have been his *general intention*.—He seems also to have taken particular pains to shew the unreasonableness, and malice of the Jews in rejecting the gospel.

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S T. J O H N.

C H A P.

I.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5.

6. 7. 8.

9.

10.

11.

THAT holy person, of whom this narration treats, being united to God from eternity, was one together with him. It is he who created the world. It is he, who offers salvation to mankind. He is a light shining through darkness. Before his face God sent his holy messenger, John the Baptist, to draw men by his testimony, to follow this true light, which God intended for the direction of mankind.

And yet even that very world, which he created, received him not. Those very creatures to whom he gave life, rejected the

1. Many learned men, and especially Dr. Lardner, have shewn, that when St. John speaks of the *word*, he did it not in conformity to the Platonists, as many have supposed; but merely as it was a customary way of speaking among the Jews. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.* Pf. xxxiii. 6. *Until the time came that his cause was known, the word of the Lord tried him.* Pf. cv. 19.

2. St. John in the two first verses, shews the *nature* of Christ—in the third his *power*; and from the fourth to the nineteenth he expatiates on the *work of redemption*.

9. Better translated; *which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.*

11. Some commentators apply this immediately to the Jews: as if they were more peculiarly his *own*. I should suppose it refers equally to all, who reject him.

12. salvation he offered. But to those who shall accept him, and
 13. believe his promises, he will give the glorious privilege of being
 the sons of God. They shall be born again, not after the manner
 of men; but through the influence of the Holy Spirit of God.

14. It was this divine person, who condescended to dwell with man;
 and we, who had nearer access to him, are the witnesses of his
 15. glory, and power. In this testimony also John the Baptist joined;
 giving the fullest evidence of his greatness, and excellence.

16. Nor was the holy religion he revealed, a less convincing proof;
 from the excellence of which hath flowed every grace, that hath
 17. been communicated to us. The law of Moses was defective and
 partial. That of Christ, being full, and clear, offers salvation
 18. to all mankind. Never before was the will of God thus revealed
 to fallen man.

19. John's testimony to this great truth, was given on this occasion.
 The austerity, and holiness of his life, and doctrines having spread
 his fame through Judea; the council at Jerusalem thought it proper
 to send certain priests, and Levites to enquire, Whether he were
 the Messiah?

20. John with great earnestness declared he was not.

14. *The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory.* This passage is commonly, and I think very justly, produced in proof of the divinity of Christ. The word *dwelt* might be translated *tabernacled*; so that here seems to be an allusion to the Deity's dwelling between the Cherubims. In the same manner as God appeared there; the Son veiled, or *tabernacled in the human form*, appeared in the flesh. The evangelist may perhaps have had *immediately* in his eye the transfiguration.

16. *Grace for grace.* Perhaps the precise meaning of these words may be, *One institution of grace in the room of another*; as the law of Moses is mentioned immediately after.

They

They then asked, Whether he was Elijah (whom the Jews supposed would rise again to introduce the Messiah) or any other of the old prophets? 21.

He assured them he was not.

They desired then to know, who he was; that they might return an answer to those who sent them? 22.

John answered from the prophet Isaiah; that he was *the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.* 23.

The Pharisees (for of that sect were these inquiring priests) desired then to know, on what authority he baptized; as his baptism certainly implied the introduction of a new religion? 24. 25.

John told them, it implied nothing as from himself: but had reference intirely to that superior person, who should soon make his appearance among them; and whose coming he was directed by the prophets to proclaim. 26. 27.

This transaction passed at the Ferry, or passage-place, on the river Jordan; where was commonly a great resort of people; and where John, at that time, had fixed his station. 28.

The next day, John seeing Jesus coming towards him, pointed him out to the people, as the Lamb of God, who came to fulfill all the typical sacrifices of the law, by taking away the sins of the world. This is he, continued John, of whose superior excellence I spoke. When I began my ministry, I knew him not. I knew only in general, that such a person should arise; and that I was to prepare his way by calling men to repentance. Now I can bear the strongest testimony. I saw the Spirit of God descending 29. 30. 31. 32.

21. John could only mean, that he was not *really the person* of Elijah; for if he knew his own designation, he was certainly that person, who was to come *in the spirit and power of Elijah.* Luke i. 17.

29. See Exod. xxx. 15. Levit. i. 4.—iii. 2.—iv. 4.

33. from heaven, and resting upon him: and that same revelation, through which I was ordered to preach, and baptize; gave me intimation also, that he, on whom I should see that distinguishing sign, was the Messiah, who should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

34. This sign therefore I saw, and bear record, that, that sacred person, on whom it rested, is the Son of God.

35. 36. It happened, the next day, that as John was standing with two of his disciples, he saw Jesus at a distance; and pointing him out, as that eminent person, who was to make atonement for the sins of the world, the two disciples followed Jesus; and by his permission attended him.

37. 38. 39. 40. 41.

42. One of them, whose name was Andrew, immediately went in quest of his brother Simon; and told him with great joy, that he had found the Messiah; and carried him to Jesus. Jesus, in the spirit of prophecy, gave him the name of *Peter*, which signifies a *rock*; implying that steady support, which he should hereafter give to the church of Christ.

43. The day after, Jesus going into Galilee, found Philip; whom he engaged to follow him. Philip lived at Bethsaida, where Andrew, and Peter also lived, from whom he had gained a knowledge of all that John had testified of Jesus. He being desirous also of communicating still farther the joyful information, went to Nathaniel, and told him the happy news of his having seen, and

42. This interview between Jesus and Peter, differs so *very materially* from that mentioned in Matthew, that we must suppose it a prior one: and that after this transaction, which John mentions, Peter returned home; and was not called to *follow* Jesus, till that time, which is recorded by St. Matthew.

45. Dr. Cave has used arguments, which have convinced many learned men, that Nathaniel was the apostle Bartholomew.

conversed

conversed with that great person, pointed out by the prophets, Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah.

Nathaniel doubting, from the mention of Nazareth, the truth of what Philip had said, Philip referred him to Jesus himself; to whom accordingly they both went. 46.

Jesus seeing Nathaniel coming to him, said, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.* 47.

As Nathaniel was expressing his surprise at this salutation, apprehending that Jesus had never before heard of him; Jesus told him farther, that before Philip called him, he had seen him under the fig-tree. This alluded to some particular circumstance, well known to Nathaniel; on which he cried out in an ecstasy of conviction, that he was sure Jesus was the Son of God, and the expected Messiah. 48.

Jesus, pleased with his ingenuity, in divesting himself of all his prejudices on the first evidence; told him, that his faith should hereafter be confirmed by many kinds of evidence still stronger than this. 49.

The first occasion, on which Jesus shewed his divine power, was at a marriage in Cana, a town of Galilee, to which Jesus, his mother, and disciples were invited. It was the third day of the marriage; and the wine falling short, Mary mentioned it to 50. 51.

C H A P.
II.
1. 2. 3.

4.

46. In the text, Nathaniel asks, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* By *good thing*, or *that good thing* as it might be rendered, it is probable, he might mean the Messiah, who is so called by the prophet Jeremiah (xxxiii. 14.) Nathaniel also no doubt knew, that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem.

51. *Hereafter you shall see heaven open, &c.* This perhaps alluding to that remarkable vision of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12) seems to apply that communication between heaven and earth, which that patriarch saw, to gospel times.

4. *Woman what have I to do with thee?* In those early days, a woman of the greatest fashion was addressed in the stile of *ω γυναι*: so that the expression implies nothing disrespectful: and the words *What have I to do with thee*, may be rendered, *What hast thou to do with me?* and seem to imply only what I have expressed above.

Jesus

Jefus. Jefus told her, that the time of his publicly fhewing himfelf to the world was not yet come; of which he was the beft judge. However he gave her fuch intimations of his intention,
 5. that fhe bad the attendants do, whatever he fhould order.

6. There flood in another room fix large earthen veffels, each containing feveral gallons, for the purpofe of thofe purifications, which
 7. were common at a Jewifh entertainment. Thefe veffels were filled
 8. by Jefus's order, with water; which was drawn off, and carried
 9. to the governor of the feaft; who was fo furprized at the excellence of the wine, into which it had been immediately changed;
 10. that yet ignorant whence it came, he mentioned it to the bridegroom, as the beft they had yet had. The fervants foon after
 11.

11. I cannot fay I underftand this miracle, as it is *commonly* underftood—that is, as a fupply of wine, in the manner, in which we ufe wine in our entertainments, by way of a regale. Wine was the common beverage of Judea: and as the Jewifh wedding-feafts lafted feven days, the liquor might be now, on the third day, nearly fpent: efpecially, as we may fuppofe, from the guefts who were invited, that the bridegroom was probably, a man in a low ftation. Our Saviour therefore gave a fupply, under the fame idea, as he fed a hungry multitude. — The word μεθυθωσι, which we render *well-drunk*, I believe, might eafily be found, in good authors, without any idea of intemperate drinking. Hippocrates plainly ufes it in oppofition to drunkennefs; ordering his patients, in fome particular cafes, μεθυσθηναι, πλην αλλα μη ες υπερβολην. (De ratione victus, Lib. III) — Dr. Clarke is pleafed with an interpretation of Dr. Clagget's on our Saviour's words to his mother; as if he had faid, “ I am not unwilling
 “ to be fought to by perfons in diftreff: but I take this matter, in which you are fo much
 “ concerned, to be of little moment, and not worth a miracle. The time is not yet come,
 “ tho it is very near, in which I fhall confirm the truth by doing beneficent miracles indeed
 “ for the relief of miferable perfons; but here is no fuch occafion. Neverthelefs I will not
 “ think much to fatisfy you in this expectation; and to do this office of courtefy to my kindred,
 “ tho there be no abfolute need of it.” — I cannot fay I am fo much pleafed, as Dr. Clarke is, with this interpretation of Dr. Clagget's. I do not think that our Saviour meant, in what he faid to his mother, to exprefs, that it was a *matter of little moment* and not *worth a miracle*: in which cafe, I prefume, he would not have wrought one. Nor do I think it was confiftent with his character to work a miracle *for courtefy*. His words appear to me plainly to imply a gentle reproof for interfering with the time and occafion of his working miracles; which refted folely with himfelf: but the evangelift, I think could never mean that Jefus fhould call any occafion *trifling*, which, as he himfelf adds, tended to *manifeft forth Jefus's glory*; and make his difciples believe on him.

explained

explained the affair; and the greatness of the miracle displayed the glory of God; and confirmed the faith of the disciples.

From hence Jesus went with his relations, and disciples to 12. 13.
Capernaum. But he made only a short stay at that place, as he was desirous to be at Jerusalem at the feast of the passover, which was approaching.

There he found the courts of the temple occupied by dealers in 14. 15. 16.
cattle, and other commodities, under the pretence of furnishing necessaries for the temple-sacrifices; all of whom he drove out, saying, *Make not my Father's house, a house of merchandize.* Then 17.
his disciples recollected the passage, in which it is said; *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*

Some of the Jews then asked, What sign he gave them to shew 18.
his authority to do these things?

Jesus knowing their hardened disposition, answered them only 19.
by a prediction of his resurrection: *Destroy this temple, said he; and in three days I will raise it again.*

What! said the Jews, a building which was above forty years 20.
in erecting, will you raise in three days?

14. St. John mentions this fact as happening in the first year after our Saviour began his ministry; the other evangelists mention it in the last. Some writers, among whom is Dr. Lardner, are of opinion it was twice performed; and indeed from the 23d verse of this chapter, and the 22d, 23d, 24th of the next, the opinion has considerable foundation. Besides, if the account we have of St. John's revising the other gospels, before he wrote his own, be true, we may suppose he gave this event its proper place.—At the same time, we must own, there is so little attention paid to the *exactness* of chronology in the sacred writers, that there is no great difficulty in supposing, with other able interpreters, the action to have been only one. The *thing itself* was thought by all the evangelists worth recording; but it might appear of little moment, whether it happened at one passover, or at another.

17. See Pf. lxix. 10.

20. Josephus informs us that the works of the temple were continued through a still longer space of time.

But

21. But Jesus spoke figuratively; intending his own body: and
 22. his disciples after his resurrection, remembered his words, which
 still the more confirmed their faith.

23. During the time of the passover, many people, seeing his miracles,
 24. 25. believed on him. But he went cautiously among them; and put
 himself very little in their power. From his divine knowledge
 he was well acquainted with the uncertainty of mankind; and
 the little dependance that he could place upon them.

C H A P.
 III.

1. Among those, who thought favourably of him, was a man of
 2. consequence among the Jews, a Pharisee, whose name was Nicodemus. Tho he had not resolution to profess his faith openly in
 Jesus, yet wishing to know somewhat more of that doctrine, which
 he had seen so miraculously proved, he came to Jesus by night
 with a view to make a more particular inquiry; professing, at the
 same time, his belief in that divine mission, which had been confirmed by such wonderful works.

3. Jesus told him, that his doctrine lay in a very short compass. A man, said he, must be born again, before he can be a member of my kingdom.

4. Nicodemus not comprehending the expression, Jesus explained
 5. himself by saying, that nobody could be his disciple, who, after
 professing himself such by baptism, did not change his life by a
 thorough repentance; and such holiness of disposition, as should
 6. always be assisted by the Spirit of God. As the mere natural life,
 he told him, depended on flesh and blood; so did the religious
 7. life on the influence of the Holy Spirit.—Does this, said he, surprize
 you? Do you believe nothing, which you do not receive through
 8. your senses? The wind, which is invisible in itself, is seen in its
 effects. Such also is the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Nicodemus

Nicodemus, still not understanding clearly these spiritual ideas, continued to express his surprise. 9.

Jesus told him, he had said nothing, but what the knowledge of the law might lead him easily to understand; and that it was prejudice in himself, rather than the want of clearness in the doctrine, which with-held him from the truth.—But, added he, if you cannot receive these plainer parts of my doctrine, which relate to the things of this world; how will you be able to receive those parts of it, which are more immediately connected with the next? truths, which mere man cannot possibly discover; and which the Son of God came from heaven to reveal?—Among these, in particular, is that great truth, which fulfills one of the types of the law—the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. As the brazen serpent healed the bodily mischiefs of those, who looked at it; so shall the Son of man's being lifted up, heal the spiritual mischiefs of all, who believe on him. As the one procured temporal health; so the other, through the kindness, and love of God, shall procure everlasting happiness. Man may turn the goodness of God, either to his happiness, or misery. It was God's design not to condemn the world, but to save it; and he, who believes, and obeys the gospel, shall, in the end, find the reward of his obedience. On the other hand, he who rejects this last great offer of salvation to mankind, must expect the consequence: and the *ground of his condemnation* is, that such a person, from the wickedness of his life, *loves* darkness, rather than light. The bad man naturally avoids the truth, which condemns him: while

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10. Our Saviour might well wonder at Nicodemus's ignorance; as the *circumcision of the heart*, Deut. x. 16—Deut. xxx. 6—the *renewal of a right spirit*, Pf. li. 10—*God's law in the inward parts*, Jer. xxxi. 33—and many other passages, all seemed plainly to point out regeneration.

21. the good man seeks it, as the ground-work, and proof of his actions.

22. After this, Jesus, and his disciples, went into Judea, to preach,
23. 24. and to baptize. At the same time, John, who was not yet thrown into prison, was baptizing at Enon, near Salim; where was a pool of water commodious for the purpose.

25. About this time a dispute arose between certain Jews, and some of John's disciples, about the efficacy of their master's baptism.
26. And the disciples, hurt with the thing, carried it to John. The ground of the dispute was, that, as Jesus baptized more disciples than John, his baptism seemed to be of a superior nature.

27. John, with great humility told his disciples, that every man
28. should be satisfied with what heaven had appointed. You are my witnesses, said he, that I always spoke of my own inferiority to Christ; and considered myself only as a messenger sent before him. I am only the bridegroom's friend: it is my part barely
29. to rejoice in his happiness. My consequence is now over: his,
30. is increasing. His commission is of higher authority, than that
31. of any prophet. And so far am I from being hurt by his
32. superiority; that I am only grieved to see you, and others, turn aside from so divine a teacher. He who receives his doctrine,
33. acknowledges the truth of God; for his doctrines prove their
34. 35.

25. Bowyer conjectures, that, instead of *μὴν Ἰουδαίου*, the true reading should be *μὴν Ἰησοῦ*. The sense would then be, *A dispute arose between the disciples of John, and those of Jesus*; which would certainly be better.

29. *Rejoiceth because of the bridegroom's voice*; alluding to the nuptial song, commonly sung on these occasions. *Solomon's song* is a most elegant specimen of the nuptial song; and seems to be referred to Christ, and the church, merely because the church is so often represented in scripture, under the idea of a *bride*.

origin;

origin; and shew from the abundance of God's Spirit, which rests upon him, that he is the great redeemer of the world.

The conclusion therefore is, that he, who believeth, and obeyeth him, shall inherit eternal life: but he who obstinately rejects, or impenitently disobeyeth him, must expect the consequences of the divine displeasure. 36.

After this, Jesus finding, that his baptizing such numbers, (tho he baptized merely by the hands of his disciples,) began to give offence to the Pharisees, left Judea; and returned into Galilee. His road led through Samaria: and being near a town, called Sychar, he sat down to rest himself on Jacob's well; so named from a piece of ground, which that patriarch gave to his son Joseph. C H A P. IV. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

As he sat there, waiting for his disciples, whom he had sent into the town to buy provisions, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus desiring her to give him some of the water she had drawn, she seemed surprized at such a request from a Jew: for the Jews and Samaritans were at such variance; that altho they had dealings with each other in trade; they had little intercourse of any friendly kind. 7. 8. 9.

Jesus told her, that, if she knew the opportunity now in her hands; instead of being surprized at his asking common water of her, she would have asked living water of him. 10.

The woman thinking he spoke of the water of some other well, seemed zealous in vindicating the honour of this, which she said, had descended to them pure from the days of Jacob. 11. 12.

5. Sychar was the ancient Sichem.

6. *Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.* It were better translated; *sat therefore, or accordingly on the well*; that is, because he was fatigued.

11. The woman observed he had *nothing to draw with.* It was a custom then in the east, and is still observed, Thevenot informs us, for all travellers to provide themselves with small leathern buckets, because the wells in those parts were furnished with no apparatus for drawing water.

13. Jesus told her, that the water of that well, however pure, afforded
 14. only a temporary relief: but the water, which he meant, quenched
 all thirst for ever.

15. The woman not yet entering into his meaning, desired him to give
 16. her some of that extraordinary water. Jesus, turning to her, said,
 17. Go, call your husband, and come hither. The woman answered,
 18. ~~she~~ had no husband. In that, said Jesus, you speak the truth: but
 you have had five husbands. He indeed, with whom you now live,
 is not your husband.

19. The woman struck with this reproof, which she knew to be the
 20. truth, and conceiving him to be a prophet; introduced the great
 national question, Whether Jerusalem, or mount Gerizim were the
 more respectable seat of worship?

21. Jesus told her, it was a question of little importance; as the time
 now approached, when men should worship God, neither in one
 22. place, nor the other—that altho the Jewish worship was evi-
 dently of a superior kind to theirs; yet both should soon be abo-
 23. 24. lished; and a purer worship established than either—that the pomp,
 and ceremonies of the law should be laid aside: and that, as the
 nature of God would now be better understood, his holy servants
 should of course be instructed in a more spiritual kind of worship.

25. The woman told him, she knew, that when the Messiah should
 come, he would put them in the way of all truth.

26. Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto thee, am he.

20. The Samaritan's argument for mount Gerizim, was, it's being supposed to be the place, where Abraham, and Jacob worshipped.

24. *In spirit and in truth*, says the original. *In spirit*, in opposition to lifeless observances—
in truth, in opposition to those typical representations, which were then fulfilled.

26. This is, I think, the only place, in the earlier part of Jesus's ministry, in which he openly confessed himself to be the Messiah. If among the Jews, he was with-held by the fear of giving offence; he was here under no such apprehension. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

In

In the mean time the disciples came to them, and were surprized to see their master in such earnest conversation with a Samaritan : while she, taking the opportunity, retired abruptly to the town ; where she told every body what had happened ; and added, that a person, who could tell her the most secret transactions of her life, could not be less than the Messiah. 27. 28. 29. 30.

On this, numbers went out of the town to see Jesus.

In the mean time the disciples bringing their provision, desired him to eat. But he told them, he had other food, which they knew not of. And as he observed them to be at a loss for his meaning, he added, that the work, which he was sent to accomplish, was more to him than food. From the time of sowing, said he, to the time of reaping, you commonly number four months. But our harvest is more advanced.—Then pointing to the Samaritans, as they were appearing at a distance in crouds from the city, he added, Our harvest, you see, is ripe already. Thus one soweth, and another reapeth ; but the labours of both shall be rewarded—the labours of him who first scatters the seed ; and of him, who afterwards reaps the harvest—the labours of Moses and the prophets, who went before you ; and the labours of you, the ministers of the gospel, who succeed, and finish their work. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38.

When the Samaritans came to Jesus, there seemed to be a general disposition among them, to believe in him. Many indeed openly professed their faith ; and all joined in requesting, that he would return with them to the city. He complied with their desire ; and stayed with them two days. 39. 40. 41. 42.

During this time many converts were made ; induced by the force, and authority of his preaching ; and told the woman, they

35. *Four months, and then cometh harvest*, was a proverbial expression among the Jews, commonly used at seed time.

believed, not on her evidence ; but on the evidence of Jesus himself. Such divine discourses, they said, as he made, could only come from the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

43. 44. From Sychar, Jesus went into Galilee, avoiding Nazareth, where he knew the people were indisposed to receive his doctrine.
45. But in other parts of Galilee, he found a ready reception ; for many of the people had been at Jerusalem, during the passover ; and had seen the miracles, which he had wrought, at that time.
46. 47. While he was at Cana, a person of some eminence came to him from Capernaum, begging he would accompany him thither, and heal his son, who lay at the point of death.
48. Jesus asked him, whether he could not believe without seeing a miracle ?
49. The parent was under such anxiety for his son, that he could think of nothing else ; and again mentioned the desperate situation, in which he lay. Jesus bade him go home, and he should find his son recovered. He immediately went, believing what Jesus had said. But before he got home, his servants met him with the joyful news of his son's recovery. On finding that he had been restored at the very hour, when Jesus pronounced him healed, he himself, and all his family, became sincere converts.—
54. This is the second miracle, which Jesus wrought in Galilee, after he had left Judea.

43. This seems to be the sense of the passage. St. Matthew says, (iv. 13.) that Jesus *left Nazareth* ; which implies, that he either left it without passing through it ; or that he did only pass through it.

46. Τις βασιλικος means *a royal person* ; or, as is generally supposed, *some person of high rank in Herod's court*.

48. In the original it is, *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe* : but Bowyer conjectures, that an interrogation should be placed after πιστιν οντι, which makes the sense much easier, by taking off that harshness which accompanies our translation.

At the next passover, Jesus went again to Jerusalem.

In that city near the sheep-market, is a pool, called Bethesda, or the *place of mercy*; which name it obtained on the following occasion.

It had been observed, that the water, through some hidden cause, was sometimes agitated; and that the first person, who stepped into it, after it's having been thus disturbed, was healed of whatever disease he had. Round this pool were built galleries,

1. From the beginning to the end of our Saviour's ministry, there seem to have been four passovers; the last only of which is mentioned by the three first evangelists. St. John takes notice of them all: chap. ii. 13. v. 1. vi. 4. xiii. 1.

4. This account of the pool of Bethesda is full of difficulty. Dr. Hamond makes the angel a messenger; and fills the pool with the entrails of sacrificed beasts, which he supposes gave it a healing quality. This very unphilosophical supposition is sufficiently refuted by Dr. Whitby in his annotations on the passage.—Others again have endeavoured to solve the difficulty by supposing the 4th verse to be an interpolation: but too many MSS, and those of high authority, oppose this supposition.—The best solution of the difficulty seems to be that of Bp. Pearce, who (in his vindication of the miracles of Jesus) supposes, that the pool was only a common swimming bath, (as the word in the original implies); but that God Almighty had during a short time, endued it with the healing quality here mentioned; as one more type, among the many other miraculous types of the Messiah, which had already been given to the Jews. This healing quality, however impressed, they ascribed, as they did all the operations of Providence, to the ministration of angels; which St. John expresses by saying, *An angel came down, &c.*

Woolston, and others, who have taken offence at this miracle, have laid great stress on the silence of Jewish writers with regard to this miraculous pool, particularly Philo and Josephus. But Philo lived in Egypt, at too great a distance to examine a miracle of so short a duration: and as to Josephus, he evidently wrote for pagan readers; and all along lays as little stress, as he can, even on the Mosaic miracles. Much less ground therefore have we to suppose, he would dwell on any thing of this kind.

I shall conclude this note, with a few lines, which shew how capable the pool of Bethesda is of furnishing beautiful poetic images.

So, erst, an angel o'er Bethesda's springs,
Each morn descending, shook his dewy wings;
And as his bright, translucent form he laves,
Salubrious powers enrich the troubled waves.

DARWEN.

OF

or porches, in which lay numbers of diseased, and infirm people, waiting for the agitation of the water.

5. 6. Jesus coming to the place, and observing, among others, a man, who had been afflicted with a disease thirty-eight years, asked him, what expectation he had of being healed?

7. Very little, answered the man; for I have nobody to assist me, when the water is troubled: and while I am making an attempt, another person, more ready, steps in before me.

8. Jesus bad him, rise, and take up his bed and walk; which
9. command the man instantly obeyed.

10. It happened to be the sabbath-day, when this miracle was performed: and some of the Pharisees seeing the man carrying his bed, told him, it was not lawful for him to carry a burden on that day.

11. The man answered, that he who had healed him, bad him do
12. it. But on their enquiry, who the person was; he could not
13. inform them, as Jesus had immediately left the place.

14. Soon afterwards Jesus met him in the temple; and reminding him of his cure, bad him sin no more, lest God should punish him in a worse manner.

15. The man now knowing who it was, that had healed him, informed the Jews, that it was Jesus.

6. From the answer which the man gave, this seems to have been the meaning of Jesus's question.

9. It hath sometimes been remarked, with wonder, that among so many diseased people, one only was singled out to be healed. But in this, as well as every other case, it is impossible to judge, unless we knew all the circumstances.

15. This he seems to have done with a good intention.

On

On this ground the Jews commenced a violent prosecution against Jesus, as a violator of the sabbath. 16.

Jesus told them, that, in imitation of God, his heavenly Father, he confined not his works of charity to time, and place. 17.

This only incensed them the more, as they declared him now, both guilty of a violation of the sabbath; and of making himself equal with God. 18.

Jesus told them, that, he acted in all things in union with God—and that the great works he had done, and the greater works, which he should do, all tended to convince them of this truth. 19.
The power of raising the dead, said he, which the Father hath; 20.
the Son hath also: and the power of judgment the Father hath 21.
committed intirely to the Son; that he also should be the object of 22.
divine honour. So that whoever honoureth not the Son, dis- 23.
honoureth the Father. Hence therefore he, who believeth in me, 24.
and obeyeth my doctrine, shall be redeemed from all that sin, and 25.
guilt, in which a mortal state involves him; and shall inherit ever-
lasting life. For the Son of God is now come to offer salvation to 26.
fallen man; and all, who hear, and obey his voice, shall be saved. 27.
For the Father, as I said, hath committed to him both the power 28.
of raising to life; and of calling into judgment. Be assured, then,
the hour cometh, when all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, 29.
and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resur-

16. Some interpreters are of opinion, that Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrim; and that the apology for himself, which continues to the end of this chapter, was made before that council. This supposition is chiefly grounded on the 33d verse, as it is plain (from John i. 19) that the Sanhedrim is there alluded to. If we consider our blessed Lord's apology in this light, it certainly receives additional dignity.

19. Some writers have brought this passage to oppose the divinity of Christ: but the natural interpretation of it, and its connection with ver. 17, seem to stand thus. *My father worketh on the sabbath, as well as other days, in the great designs of his providence; and I work in like manner. Therefore the Son (ver. 19) can do nothing of himself; that is, separately from the Father; but is, in all things, united with him.*

rection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

30. You see then with how little justice, you accuse me of the breach of a law of God, when I do nothing without his power and authority. If I alone bore testimony to myself, my testimony might be suspected; but I have the testimony of John also, for whose great character you all have the highest esteem. You remember the testimony which he bore, when you sent to consult him. I urge this merely to draw you to the truth, by the strength of such evidence, as is most suited to you: for myself, I lay little stress on any human authority.—The miraculous works, that I perform, are, beyond all, a testimony, that God hath sent me. And tho here the witness is invisible; yet the testimony is evident.—
31. 32. 33.
34. 35. 36. But your unbelief is proof against all, for you know as little of that God, who testifies; as you do of me, to whom he bears testimony. You profess to search the scriptures, as the fountain of life; and yet they strongly testify of me.—It is not therefore for want of sufficient evidence, that you reject the life, I offer; but through the influence of your wicked affections. Every thing tends to shew you, that I am not guided by any worldly views; yet you have not the love of God sufficiently in you, to listen to any instruction.—
37. But tho you receive not me, who come in God's name; you are ready to receive others, who come in their own. Nor can it be otherwise, while a love of the world, and it's honours, lies at your hearts.—Think not, that I mean to accuse you. But remember, there is one, in whom you trust, even Moses himself, who

30. That this is a transition, seems plain (as Dr. Clarke observes,) both from the sense; and from it's beginning, just as the 19th verse does, which begins the argument.

44. Our Saviour's telling the Jews, of *their receiving honour one of another*, seems to have reference to the members of the Sanhedrim; who were remarkable for giving each other founding titles.

will accuse you. For if you had believed the writings of Moses, you 46.
 could not but have believed in me, of whom Moses testifies. But if
 you believe not his testimony, it is impossible, you can pay any 47.
 attention to my doctrine.

After this, Jesus passed over the sea of Tiberias, and retired
 to a mountain with his disciples. But his retreat could not be
 hid: for it was about the time of the passover; and many people,
 who had seen his miracles, and were going that way, heard of
 him, and began to croud about him. As he saw the people
 gathering in that solitary place, he was desirous to give them
 some refreshment, before he sent them away; and asked Philip,
 (tho with a view only to try him,) where he might procure
 food to supply so large a multitude? Philip told him, that all the
 money they had, could not purchase bread enough to supply every
 one of them with a morsel. But another of the disciples, at
 the same time, informing him, that a lad there had five loaves,
 and two small fishes; he ordered the people, who were about
 five thousand, to sit down in companies on the grass; and taking
 the bread, and fish, he gave thanks, and distributed them, through
 the hands of his disciples, among the people. When they were
 all satisfied, he bad his disciples gather up the fragments, that
 nothing might be lost. With these they filled twelve baskets.
 The multitude, on seeing this great miracle, universally declared,
 that Jesus was that prophet, whom they expected. And indeed
 their zeal, in a little time, arose to such a degree; that Jesus,
 finding they were inclined, in a tumultary manner, to place him at
 their head, retired from them, unobserved, to a place of solitude.

CHAP.
 VI.
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15. It always appears, that the multitude followed Jesus under the idea of his being that leader, who should restore their temporal grandeur.

16. 17. In the mean time, as evening approached, the disciples took boat, and coasted the lake, towards Capernaum; expecting to take up Jesus, on some part of the shore: but he no where appeared;
18. 19. and a dark, tempestuous night came on. They were not however kept long in suspense, before he came to them walking on the lake. At first they were afraid: but when he spake to them,
20. they gladly received him into the boat; which immediately
21. arrived at the place, they intended.

22. 23. 24. The next day, the people, who had observed the disciples had gone alone; and that there was at that time, no other boat near the place; conceiving however that Jesus was in some way, gone to them, got into a few boats, which had just arrived
25. from Tiberias, and went to Capernaum in quest of him. When they had found him, they expressed their surprize how he got there. Jesus, instead of gratifying their curiosity, told them, they followed him not so much for the sake of obtaining conviction from his miracles; as for the sake of the worldly advantages,
26. which they expected from him. Be not, said he, solicitous about these things; but let your attention be fixed on that spiritual food, which is meant to be the nourishment of your souls; and which the Son of man shall give you, as the Father hath impowered him to do.

28. They asked him, What they should do to obtain this spiritual food?

29. They must receive it, he told them, from him, whom God had sent.

30. They asked him, what extraordinary sign he gave them of being the dispenser of this spiritual food? He had fed them indeed in a miraculous manner with earthly bread; but could he

21. See a note on Matt. xiv. 25.

give them bread also from heaven, as their fathers had eaten manna in the wilderness?

Jesus told them, that the spiritual food, which he meant, 32.
was much superior to what Moses had given their fathers. It not
only came down from heaven; but it had this peculiar advan- 33.
tage, that it was able to nourish them, not merely for a few
years, but for ever.

The Jews however not yet understanding him; Jesus told them 34. 35. 36.
plainly, that when he spoke of spiritual food from heaven, he
meant himself, and his doctrine, which they could not relish,
while their minds ran on temporal things. But I will kindly 37.
receive all those, said he, who shall endeavour to obtain the
assistance of the Holy Spirit of God; and who come to me in
an honest, and sincere heart. All such may be assured, on the 38.
same evidence, on which they believe in me, that this is the
will of my Father also; and that he hath instructed me to draw 39. 40.
together all his faithful servants, who believe, and obey the
gospel; and to raise them to everlasting life.

As Jesus had now plainly pointed out his meaning; and shewn 41.
them, that by the bread, which came down from heaven, he
meant himself; they began to take offence; and looking only 42.
at his earthly parentage, they cried, How inconsistently doth
this man talk of coming down from heaven, when we all know
from what parentage he sprang?

Lay aside, said Jesus, these undue prejudices; and endeavour 43. 44.
to be among those, whom the gracious influence of the Spirit
of God, shall draw to me, as the heirs of eternal life; and to be
among those, of whom the prophet speaks, *They shall all be* 45.

33. Ο καταβαινων, in the original, should be translated, *It which cometh*, not *He which cometh*.

45. See Isa. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 33. 34.

taught of God. This prophecy, Jesus added, is now fulfilled. Every one therefore, who is disposed to listen to this gracious
 46. instruction, will come to me.—Do not however suppose, that
 47. you shall have any immediate revelations, or visions from God. His will is revealed through me; and whoever believeth in me, and obeyeth that will, shall inherit eternal life.

48. In this light then I call myself the bread of life. The manna,
 49. which your fathers eat in the wilderness, could only preserve a
 50. mortal life. That is the true bread of life, which qualifies every one, who eats it, for everlasting happiness.

51. I call myself this bread, not only on account of that doctrine, which purifies the soul, and fits it for a state of happiness—but also, because I shall give my own life to procure the life of the world.

52. 53. 54. This speech occasioned some murmuring among the Jews: and as
 55. 56. 57. Jesus, who was then teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum,
 58. 59. 60. continued in the same figurative stile, to represent the faith of his true disciples under the ideas of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; many of his followers took great offence, and declared themselves unable to comprehend such doctrines.

61. 62. What, said Jesus, if you should see the Son of man, as you hereafter may, ascending up into heaven, would not this be a convincing proof, that he also descended from heaven? And
 63. with regard to the language I use, why do you conceive it in that gross, verbal sense? It is the spiritual application only, to
 64. which you ought to attend. But, continued Jesus, who well knew the carnal dispositions of many around him, I know there are some, who have no faith; and without faith, it is impossible
 65. for any one to feel the influence of God's Holy Spirit, which draws him to me.

66. Many of Jesus's followers, taking offence at these doctrines, soon after withdrew themselves from him.

Then

Then Jesus turning to the twelve, said, Will you also leave me? 67.

Peter with great zeal answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? Tho others may wilfully mistake your words; we are well assured, they are the words of eternal life: and tho others may waver in their faith, we are thoroughly convinced, that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. 68. 69.

Be not, said Jesus, too confident of your own good dispositions. I have indeed chosen you twelve to be my constant companions: but notwithstanding that, one of you will be my greatest adversary. —This was a warning to Judas Iccariot, who afterwards, betrayed him. 70. 71.

After this Jesus continued some time longer in Galilee; not chusing to go into Judea, where the malice of the Jews was so determined against him. But as the feast of tabernacles approached, his brethren, (who had yet no firm belief in him) wished him to leave that obscure part of the country, where he then was; and to go with them into Judea, where he might make himself more known; and increase the number of his followers. C H A P. VIII. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

My situation, and yours, said Jesus, are very different. Against you the world bears no malice; but me it hates, as one in opposition to all it's views. 6. 7.

He then left them to go to Jerusalem, at their own time; and continuing a while longer in Galilee, he afterwards went privately to Jerusalem alone. 8. 9. 10.

5. It is probable his brethren, like others, had their early prejudices to conquer: but we need not suppose, they were thorough infidels; or that they did not give this advice from their hearts. It is certain they afterwards became firm believers. See Acts i. 14.

11. In the mean time, the rulers of the Jews were very inquisitive
 12. to find him; while the multitude seemed divided; some saying he
 13. was a good man; others, that he was a mere seducer. None how-
 ever cared to speak openly, through a fear of giving offence to the
 chief priests.

14. It was about the midst of the feast, when Jesus went up to
 Jerusalem: and as his manner was, he taught publicly in the
 temple.

15. It happened, that several of the Jews, who wished him ill, were
 present; and were astonished at his discourses. How can a person,
 said they, born, and educated, as this man hath been, attain such
 knowledge?

16. Jesus told them, they might well be surprized at this, on a sup-
 position, that his knowledge were attained in the common way of
 men; but the wonder ceased, when they considered his doctrine
 17. as derived immediately from God. Every one, added he, who is
 disposed in his heart to obey my doctrine, will soon also learn to
 know from whence it comes. A truly good man will find my
 doctrines, and his own feelings, so entirely to agree, that this very
 18. agreement will be an evidence beyond any argument. One great
 mark of truth, which my doctrine certainly carries with it, is this,
 19. it seeks not the glory of it's teacher; but that of it's great author.
 How well qualified you are to judge of these doctrines; and with how
 much sincerity you act, may easily be seen. That law, which you
 yourselves acknowledge—the law of Moses—you do not observe.

15. It is not probable, that this knowledge related to any part of human learning; but
 merely to the scriptures.

Even at this very time, you are meditating murder ; and are resolved to put me to death.

At so direct a charge the Jews exclaimed, that he was certainly possessed. Which of us, they cried, is resolved to put you to death ?

20.

Jesus taking for granted their malicious intentions, and the cause, which produced them ; did not answer their question, but proceeded to tell them ; that the cure which he had wrought on the sabbath-day, and which had so much incensed them against him, was not a transgression of the law, beyond what they themselves often practised. If the sabbath-day, said he, happen to be the eighth day from the birth of a child, you circumcise him on that day. And is it a greater breach of the law to heal an object of misery ?—Lay aside therefore your prejudices ; and consider things by the rules of justice, and equity.

21. 22.

23.

24.

Some of the Jews, observing the free manner, in which Jesus spoke, and knowing the designs of the chief priests, asked each other, Whether this could be the person, whom they intended to put to death ? He preaches openly, said they, as if unconcerned. Others thought it probable, the chief priests might be convinced, that he was the Messiah : while many were of opinion, that as *no one could declare the generation of the Messiah*, Jesus could not, according to the prophets, answer that description, because every one knew his family and parentage.

25.

26.

27.

In answer to their objections, Jesus told them, that if it were not for the hardness of their hearts, they might easily convince themselves of his divine original ; and by the greatness of his works, be fully satisfied, who sent him.

28. 29.

21. Supposed to be the cure at Bethesda.

30. There seemed however to be a great division among the people. Some wished to lay hands on him; tho nobody attempted it, as his
 31. time was not yet come. Others thought favourably of him, and said, that when Christ should come, it was impossible, he should shew greater power, than Jesus had done.

32. The Pharisees finding the attention of the people so much engaged by Jesus, and his doctrine; and at the same time, observing, that a party was rather forming against him; took that opportunity to send officers privately to seize him.

33. Jesus knew their intentions; and told them plainly, that in a little time he should lay down his life, and return to God, who
 34. 35. 36. had sent him: but that time was not yet come; and till then, it was not in their power to interrupt his designs.—They however either did not, or would not, understand his meaning.

37. 38. 39. The last day of the feast of tabernacles was the most solemn of the whole. On that day it was customary for the people to fetch water from the pool of Siloam, which they poured out, as a drink-offering to God. This was done in remembrance of the relief, their fathers had received in the wilderness from the water, which Moses struck from the rock.

34. Some interpreters suppose, the expression, *where I am, thither ye cannot come*, conveys some menace of future judgment. But as our Saviour uses the same expression to his *disciples* (xiii. 33) it cannot well have that meaning.

38. *As the scripture hath said:* This seems not to allude to any particular prophecy; but to the whole tenor of the prophetic writings. If it alludes to any particular passage, it seems to be Isa. lv. 1, which begins, *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, &c.* This chapter was always read, during the ceremony of bringing water from the pool of Siloam; and it is probable therefore that our Saviour, who often alludes to visible objects before him, might allude to the priests singing, or repeating this chapter.

As

As the people therefore were performing this ceremony, Jesus put them in mind, that these waters were only the types, or signs of that spiritual water, which he came to give them: and alluding to the effusion of the Spirit, after his death, and glorification; he compared it to rivers of living water, which they who believed in him, should receive, and be enabled to dispense.

The authority, and dignity, with which he spake of the future gifts of the Spirit, drew over numbers of people to think favourably of him. Many said, he was the expected prophet, the forerunner of the Messiah. Some said, he could not be less, than the Messiah himself: while others doubted, only from his having been born, as they supposed, in Galilee; whereas Christ, they knew, was to be born at Bethlehem, of the lineage of David. 40. 41. 42.
43.

There were some however, who were of the party of the chief priests; and wished to apprehend him. But nobody durst attempt so bold an action. Even the officers, who had been sent for this purpose, returned without performing their errand; and being questioned, Why they had not brought him, answered, That it was impossible to offer violence to him. Never man, said they, spake as he did. 44.
45.
46.

What! said the chief priests, are you also misled? Have any of the Pharisees believed on him? You will find none but the ignorant multitude deceived. 47.
48.
49.

46. This is an exclamation, says the pious Doddridge, which I hope we all make, when we read the scriptures.

49. The Pharisees had such an opinion of themselves, that they used to say, nobody could partake of the resurrection, but themselves; and such as had connected themselves to a Pharisee by good offices. *The people*, they would say, are accursed; they are the footstools of the Pharisees.

50. It happened, that Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night,
 51. sat then in council with the chief priests; and ventured so far to
 oppose their prejudices, as to ask, Whether the law condemned
 any man, before he had first been heard?

52. But this only drew on him the reproof of those, who sat at
 council with him. What, said they, are you also the Galilean's
 friend? Look into the scriptures, and see whether you any
 where find, that the Messiah shall arise out of Galilee?

53. The council however finding they could do nothing effectual
 against Jesus, put an end to their deliberations.

CHAP.
 VIII.

1. 2.

In the mean time, evening drawing on, Jesus retired to the
 mount of Olives; and early the next morning returned to the
 temple, where, as usual, he instructed the people.

3. In this employment he was soon interrupted by a body of
 Scribes, and Pharisees, who brought before him a woman
 4. 5. taken in adultery; desiring to know, with great appearance of
 reverence, and respect, whether he did not think, she should
 be put to death, as Moses had commanded?

6. Their malicious design in this inquiry, was to make him
 obnoxious to the Romans, if he said, they ought to put her to
 death; or to the Jews, if he said, they ought not.

52. The *sense*, I think, can only be as the words are here explained; and not as we translate them, *Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*: for many prophets, Jonah certainly, and probably others, had arisen out of Galilee: and yet the word *προφητης*, without the article, rather leads to the sense, as expressed in our translation.

6. The intention here was just the same as in the tribute money. It was a national question. In one case it was, Whether the Jews, as a free people descended from Abraham, ought to pay tribute? In the other, Whether they had power to execute Moses's law by putting an adulteress to death?

Jesus

Jesus therefore, well-knowing their intention, seemed occupied on his own thoughts; and being in a fitting posture, stooped down, as if writing on the ground. On their urging the question, he raised himself, and said, Let him who is without sin, cast the first stone; and then returned to his former posture. 7.
8.

The Scribes, and Pharisees were disconcerted with this answer; and not chusing to put the matter on such an issue, went off, one by one. 9.

Jesus raising himself again, and seeing the woman standing alone, asked her, Where her accusers were gone? And whether any one had condemned her? To which she answered, No one. Neither, said Jesus, do I pass any judicial sentence upon you; but reprove you only for your wickedness, and exhort you to sin no more†. 10.
11.

On another occasion, as Jesus was instructing the people in the nature of his religion; and telling them, he came into the world to dispel ignorance, and wickedness; and through faith to lead mankind to eternal life; it happened, that some of the Pharisees were among his hearers; who thinking, from a part of his discourse, that they had gained a good handle against him, told him, that as he had borne testimony of himself, his testimony could not be true. 12.
13.

Jesus answered, that to those, who were disposed to hear the truth, his own testimony, was sufficient: but as they were not so disposed, they required other evidence. They judged, he said, according to the prejudices of the world. But it was 14.

† This account of the woman taken in adultery is omitted in several evangelistries, and in some MSS; probably because it gave offence; as if Jesus had encouraged adultery. It is plain however, that Jesus refused only to condemn the woman in a *magistral capacity*. As a *sinner* he condemned her, and bad her *sin no more*.

15. 16. not his business at present, to pass sentence upon them. Yet the testimony which I offer, said he, is not my own, but is
 17. united with my Father's. The law is satisfied with the
 18. testimony of two persons. Mine is not single. The mighty works, which I have performed, are my Father's evidence for me.
19. The Jews asked, whom he meant by his Father ?
 Jesus told them, their hardened hearts prevented their listening to the divine truths, which he unfolded. If they had known him, they would have known his Father also.
20. 21. These things were spoken in the temple ; but nobody durst offer to apprehend him.
- Jesus added, Your designs against me cannot take place till the time of my suffering arrives. I shall speedily leave you : but if you continue to oppose the truth, you will die in your sins, without being able to follow me.
22. The Jews in derision, asking, whether he would kill himself
 23. to prevent their following him ; he told them, his words had a very different meaning. He meant to express to them their low, and earthly dispositions, which if not amended, would
 24. for ever disqualify them for spiritual enjoyments. It was for

15. 16. 17. I insert the following explication, which I have met with, of these verses, that the reader may judge for himself.

The word *κρίνω* has a double sense. It signifies both *to form an opinion of*, and *to condemn judicially*. In this place, suppose we understand it to mean, *forming such an opinion, as a judge does, before he passes sentence* ; let us see what would be the meaning of the passage. Christ says, *I judge no man*. My kingdom is not of this world. I do not *now* judge you. Yet if I should judge (and I have given you, in the preceding verses, a slight intimation of the opinion I have formed of you) it is a very serious matter : for my judgment is true, as the Father, who hath sent me, is with me, and assists me in forming a right judgment.—17. But to return to your accusation of me. You say my record is not true. Now it is written in your law, &c.

this

this reason he told them, they should die in their sins ; which they certainly should do, unless they purified their affections by believing in him.

The Jews then desiring him to give them a more particular account of his pretensions ; he told them he had already repeatedly declared by whom he was sent. Were it not, added he, for the hardened impenitence of your hearts, I could open many things to you ; but I shall leave with you this one consideration—that I received the doctrines, which I have ever taught, from the high authority, to which I have always referred. 25. 26.

The Jews still expressing their disbelief ; Jesus added, After you have put me to death, it shall then be more evident to you, from the great circumstances, which shall follow that event ; that all my pretensions from the Father, and of acting in concert with him, were true. 27. 28. 29.

The dignity, and force, which accompanied these last words of Jesus, were such, that many professed their belief in him. Jesus assured them, that if they continued in that profession, they should be his disciples indeed. You shall know the truth, said he, and the truth shall make you free. 30. 31.

This speech again excited the malice of the unbelieving part of his audience. What ! said they, can we receive any higher degree of freedom, than we have already received from Abraham ? 32. 33.

Jesus told them, that wicked people were always slaves, fast bound in the fetters of sin. The slave, said he, is not properly a part of the household ; but the son certainly is ; and he, 34. 35. 36.

33. In the text it is, *they answered*, that is, in strict grammar, they who had just professed their belief, answered. But we cannot reasonably suppose, either their faith to be so very inconsistent—or that such a speech should shake it. But grammatical niceties are not always observed.—The Jews must have meant this freedom in a spiritual sense ; for in a temporal sense the nation had been often in bondage.

whom the son, under the authority of the father, shall make free. That you are descended from Abraham, I allow : but as you oppose me with such malice, because my doctrine is of too pure, and heavenly a nature for you, you plainly shew, whose children you are.

39. The Jews asked, Whose children they could be, but the children of Abraham ?

If you were the children of Abraham, said Jesus, you would do the works of Abraham. But by your malice to me, who have told you the truth, you plainly shew, that altho you are descended from Abraham, you possess none of his spirit. Your actions discover your true father.

We are no idolaters, said the Jews : we worship one God, whose children we are.

42. If God, said Jesus, were your father, I, who come from God, and have testified myself as such by my works, might expect your love. But you allow not my authority, because you cannot bear my doctrine. They, who do the works of the devil, are the children of the devil. He was an enemy to all truth, because he had no truth in himself. And thus the only cause of your opposition to me, is, because I tell you the truth. Either believe my authority ; or disprove it. An honest, sincere heart is all that is wanting for the reception of God's word. You have not this ; and certainly therefore are not the children of God.

48. The Jews then in great wrath, began to tax him with madness ; saying, he was worse than a Samaritan.

49. Jesus told them, that every thing they laid to his charge, was founded merely on the obedience he paid to God ; whose glory he sought ; and who would, in his own time, vindicate his word.

word. It shall then appear, said he, that they, who obey my doctrine, shall never see death.

What ! said the Jews, with great eagerness, are you greater than our father Abraham and the prophets ? Yet they are all dead. Whom do you make yourself ? 52. 53.

Jesus answered, he made not himself greater, or less. His honour was from his Father ; whom they called their God. But their hearts, and doctrines were as opposite to almighty goodness ; as his were acceptable to it. Your father Abraham himself, said he, rejoiced to see my day ; and considered it as the completion of all his hopes. 54. 55. 56.

What, said the Jews, have you, who are not fifty years of age, seen Abraham ? 57.

Be assured, said Jesus, that before Abraham was, I AM. 58.

On this, their rage exceeding all bounds, they took up stones to put him to instant death : but as his time of suffering was not yet come, he miraculously passed through them, and left the temple. 59.

Soon after, as Jesus was on the road with his disciples, they met a man, who had been born blind. The disciples supposing, that C H A P.
IX.
1. 2.

58. One should imagine, that Christ's asserting his divinity in the *very same words*, which the Almighty uses (Exod. iii. 14) would be sufficient to establish that great doctrine, if we had no other proof.

2. *Who did sin*, said the disciples to our Saviour, *this man, or his parents, that he was born blind ?*

What they meant by his *parents sinning*, is intelligible enough ; but what they meant by the *man's own sinning*, before he was born, is not so easy. It could not relate to any notion of original sin, for that was no *particular* case ; and some *particularity* in the case was implied in the question. The most obvious solution of the difficulty, is, that the transmigration of souls was, at this time, a popular opinion among the Jews : so that, a soul, which had sinned in one body, might afterwards be punished in a more imperfect one. That this opinion prevailed among the Jews, appears from the writings of Philo. Josephus also (De bell. Jud.

that misery of every kind was intended as a punishment for sin ; and observing here an instance of a person's being punished, before he was able to commit sin, they were perplexed with the difficulty, and laid it before their master.

3. Jesus told them, there was no occasion to suppose that the malady before them, was meant at all as a *punishment*—that temporal evils were laid on men, for other causes—sometimes to *try them*,
 4. 5. —sometimes to make them the *instruments of God's glory*. You see particularly, said he, that these maladies among men afford me many opportunities, while I continue in the world, of manifesting the power of God ; and proving the truth of religion.
6. Having said this, he touched the eyes of the blind man with a
 7. little clay, which he had made on the spot ; and bidding him go, and wash in the pool of Siloam, he was from that moment perfectly restored.
8. 9. 10. They who had seen the man for many years, sitting blind, and begging by the road-side ; and seeing him now so perfectly restored, could scarce believe him to be the same person ; but calling him, questioned him on the subject.
11. The man told them, that a person, named Jesus, had healed
 12. him ; and related the circumstances of the cure : but he could not inform them, what was become of his benefactor.
13. Soon after, the affair coming to the Pharisees, they assembled
 14. 15. in council ; and sent for the man ; asking the same questions, and

lib. II. c. 12) confirms it ; and the author of the book of Wisdom seems to allude to the same doctrine, when he tells us, *that being good, he came into a body undefiled*. Chap. viii. 20.—Others, not satisfied with this solution, contend, that the Jews of those times believed they were punished, not for their own sins, but for the sins of their forefathers.

7. Blindness, occasioned by disease, had been cured ; but to give sight to a *man born blind*, was considered by the Jews, as one of the characteristics of the Messiah ; (see Isa. xxxv. 5) and for this reason it is probable the Pharisees were so desirous of disproving the miracle.

receiving

receiving the same answers, which the people had done before. The great offence was, that the miracle had been wrought on the sabbath-day. Many therefore said, It was impossible that Jesus could be a person sent from God, because he had profaned the sabbath. Others thought it was impossible for a sinner to perform such a miracle. They asked the man therefore, what he thought of the person, who had opened his eyes ? 16. 17.

Certainly, said he, I think him a prophet.

The Pharisees still seeming to doubt the fact, sent for the parents of the blind man ; and enquired of them, Whether this man were their son ? Whether he had been born blind ? And in what manner he had received his sight ? 18. 19.

They answered, he was certainly their son ; and had certainly been born blind : but by what means he had recovered his sight they knew not. But he was of age, they said : and was able to give them the best account himself. 20. 21.

This cautious answer was dictated by fear ; for the Sanhedrim had determined to excommunicate any person, who should acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah. 22. 23.

The Jewish rulers then again called the blind man himself ; and bad him attribute solely to God the gracious cure, he had received. As for this Jesus, said they, we know him to be a sinner. 24.

Whether he be a sinner, or no, answered the man, I know not. One thing I know, that I was blind, and now see. 25.

They then asked him again, in what manner his eyes had been opened ? 26.

The man, vexed at their malicious, uncandid sentiments, answered, that he had already told them to no purpose. Do you want the means, said he, of being convinced ? or have any of you an intention to become his disciple ? 27.

28. On this they reviled him, calling him a disciple of Jesus : but
 29. for themselves, they acknowledged no master, but Moses. To
 him they knew God had revealed his will : but as for this Jesus,
 they knew not from whence he was.

30. Full of that noble spirit, which truth and gratitude inspired, the
 man answered, Why, this is a wonderful thing, that you know
 31. 32. not from whence he is, tho you see he hath wrought so great a
 miracle. Could a sinner have so much favour with God ? When
 33. did you ever hear before, of a person's opening the eyes of a man
 born blind ? If he had not been sent by God, he could have done
 nothing.

34. This was more than the pride of the Pharisees could bear.
 What ! said they, shall such a sinful wretch as thou art, instruct
 us ?

On this they immediately excommunicated him.

35. Jesus hearing what they had done, found the man, and asked
 him, Whether he believed in the Son of God ?

36. Tell me, said he, who he is, that I may believe in him.

37. Jesus answered, I, your benefactor, am he.

38. On this the man, with great devotion, falling down before
 him, expressed his faith in the strongest terms.

39. Jesus, in allusion to the case before him, added, that his
 doctrine was intended to make a great discrimination among men.
 They whose blindness proceeded from mere ignorance, should
 be taught to see ; while they who saw only through pride, and
 prejudice, should be left in their wilful blindness.

40. Some of the Pharisees, who were present, supposing that the
 latter part of this speech alluded to them, asked him, If he thought
 them blind ?

41. If, said Jesus, you are among those, who are blind through
 ignorance, you are not those of whom I spake. But if your
 blindness

blindness proceeds from prejudice, and voluntary error; you are not only blind; but your blindness is guilt. You profess to be teachers of the people: but consider well under what authority you act; and what doctrines you teach. He that entereth not the sheepfold by the door, may well be suspected. The true shepherd enters by the door, and performs all the offices of a good pastor. His sheep, in return, know, and follow him. But a stranger, whose voice they know not, they will avoid.

The Pharisees, not seeming to understand this allusion, Jesus spoke more plainly.

I, said he, am the only door, through which the sheep-fold can be entered. All, who pretend to open the door of salvation, in opposition to me, are deceivers: tho none, who are sincere, and desirous to see the truth, can be deceived by them. Whoever therefore enters through me, shall find pasture, that will nourish him to eternal life. The impostor has no end, but to destroy for his own advantage. My end is to give life, and immortality. I am the true shepherd, ready to lay down my life for my flock. The hireling seeth the wolf coming; and without any affection for his flock, leaveth them to be destroyed. He leaveth them, because he is a mere hireling, and careth not for them. The true shepherd is united to his flock. He and it are united, as the Father and the Son are united. Other sheep also I have of

1. Our Saviour here probably alludes to the ceasing of the Mosaic law; as superseded by the gospel; which became now the only allowable way into the sheep-fold. Or he may mean, that the Pharisees were false teachers, even of the very law they taught.—Sir Isaac Newton, in his remarks on Daniel (p. 148) observes that Jesus made these allusions to the sheep, that were kept in folds near the temple, for sacrifices.

5. It was usual in eastern countries for shepherds to lead their flocks out to pasture, to the sound of the pipe. In some countries it is yet practised.

16. Most probably this is spoken of the Gentiles.

different folds; them also will I draw together, and unite with these. It is the act of laying down my life voluntarily, and taking it again, that is so agreeable to my Father. The malice of my enemies could have no effect against me, unless I chose myself to lay down my life. By my power of taking it again, may be seen my power of laying it down. Yet in this I act entirely in concert with my Father.

These discourses, tho' not clearly understood, occasioned much division among the people. Some said, that Jesus was plainly mad; and did not deserve attention. Others said, that the late great miracle he had wrought on the blind man, undoubtedly refuted that charge.

It happened, about this time, that as he was walking in the portico of the temple (for it was in the winter season near the time of the Maccabean dedication) that many of the Jews, who were there, coming about him, desired him to speak in plain language, whether he were really the Messiah?

Jesus knowing their malicious intentions, told them, if their hearts had not been hardened, he had said enough already to convince them. The miracles, which he wrought, bore sufficient testimony to the authority, under which he acted. But your unbelief, said he, arises not from the want of evidence; but from the want of an honest, sincere heart. They who are well-disposed, will hear, and attend to me; and by persevering in their obedience, will resist every difficulty in this world, and

23. Solomon, as Josephus informs us, not finding room enough on mount Sion for the completion of his design in building the temple, raised a massy wall from the bottom to the top of the mountain; and filling up the intermediate space with earth, founded upon it a vast portico; part of which continued in the second temple, and was known by the name of *Solomon's porch*.

inherit

inherit eternal life in the next. No violence, nor outward force 29. 30.
of any kind, can affect them; through the influence of my
Father; with whom I act in perfect union.

This latter speech excited the indignation of the Jews so much, 31.
that they took up stones to put him to death.

Jesus reminded them of the many great works he had done; 32.
and asked them, for which of these they meant to destroy him?

The Jews told him, their indignation was excited, not for 33.
his good works; but for his blasphemous discourse; and for
making himself equal with God, tho he was only a mere man.

How perversely, answered Jesus, do you behave? Are not 34.
they, who act under the authority of God, styled Gods in your
law? And if you allow this; how is it, that you are so offended
at me, for calling myself the Son of God; when I act so 35. 36.
evidently under God's power, and authority? If I perform
not works beyond the power of man to perform, I claim no 37.
credit. But if you see me perform such works, as no human
power can effect; tho you pay no credit to me on my own ac- 38.
count; yet believe me at least on the credit of my miracles.

This explanation, instead of softening their rage, excited it. 39.
But Jesus passed through the croud unobserved; and leaving
Jerusalem, retired to the parts about Jordan; where John 40.
had formerly baptized.

30. *I, and my Father are one.* This text is brought among the first, to prove the divinity of Christ. If the proof depended only on the terms, perhaps it would not be so strong: for we have the words *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, where *unity of nature* is not intended. *He that planteth, and he that watereth, ἐν ἑαυτῷ*: they concur in one design. But certainly the words receive great force from the 33d verse; which shews, that the Jews, who must have understood what our Saviour meant, conceived them as a claim to divinity.

41. 42. Here many came to him in his retreat, and believed on him, saying, John wrought no miracles, as Jesus doth; while all that John testified of Jesus, is true.

CHAP.

XI.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

In the village of Bethany lived a family, for whom Jesus had always expressed much regard; consisting of a brother, and two sisters, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary; the last of whom was the person, who anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair. The brother being taken ill, the two sisters immediately sent to inform Jesus; who returned an answer, assuring them that their brother's illness should not end in death; but was intended merely, that religion, and the glory of God, should be more confirmed.

6.

7.

8.

After this, he continued two days, where he was; and then told his disciples, he proposed to return into Judea; which surprised them not a little, considering the late ill-treatment he had met with there.

9. 10.

11.

12. 13. 14.
15.

Jesus told them, that as men walk safely in the day; and fear dangers only in the night; so he was in no danger, till the appointed time of his sufferings arrived. He then informed them, that their friend Lazarus was asleep: and he went to awake him. But the disciples not understanding him, he told them plainly that Lazarus was dead. And I am glad, said he, that I was not with him before; as I shall now be enabled to confirm your faith by a great miracle.

10. Our translation renders it, *because there is no light in him*. It makes much better sense, to translate it, *because there is no light in it*—that is, in the world.

Thomas was the only one of the disciples, who seemed to doubt what his master had said; and could not help discovering his doubts by some expressions of despondency. 16.

In the mean time Jesus began his journey to Bethany; where he found that Lazarus had now lain four days in the grave. As Bethany was within two miles of Jerusalem, many people from the city, (acquaintances of Martha, and Mary,) had come to console them in their distress. It happened therefore, that many witnesses of this great event were assembled. 17.
18. 19.

Martha hearing of Jesus's approach, went to meet him; and expressed a wish, that he had arrived sooner. But even now, said she, I know, that whatever you ask of God, shall be granted. 20.
21.
22.

Jesus told her, her brother should rise again. 23.

I know, said Martha, that he shall rise again at the last day. 24.

Jesus said, Through me, is the resurrection to eternal life. He that believeth in me, tho he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Do you believe this? 25.
26.

Martha with great confidence expressed her firm belief, that he was the Christ, the Saviour of the world. 27.

Jesus then ordered her to call her sister; who immediately left the house, and was followed by the Jews, who were with her; and who supposed she was gone to weep over her brother's grave. She found Jesus in the place, where Martha had left him; and falling down before him, expressed the same wish her sister had done, that he had been present, before her brother's death. 28. 29. 30.
31. 32.

16. Some commentators suppose, and among them Dr. Clark, that when Thomas says, *That we may die with him*, he means with *Jesus*. The words may favour either sense; but I think the sense I have taken, the more probable,

33. 34. Jesus seeing the distress, and affliction of the whole company, was observed to weep. Then turning to them, he asked where they had laid him?

35. 36. 37. As they were going to the place, the Jews seeing the concern, which Jesus expressed; and concluding from thence, how great his affection was to Lazarus; asked each other, Why a person, who could open the eyes of the blind, could not also have healed the disease, of which Lazarus died?

38. 39. When they came to the grave, Jesus looking round him with a sigh, bad them remove the stone, which closed it's entrance.

Martha told him, that as the body had now lain four days in the grave, it was by this time turned to corruption.

40. Did I not tell you, said Jesus, that if you would only believe, you should see the power of God?

41. 42. They removed the stone therefore, and Jesus having prayed to God in the audience of the people, that they might all consider the miracle he was about to work, as an appeal to almighty power; cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. On this he rose from the tomb, bound, as he was, with grave-cloaths; instantly restored to perfect health.

45. This great miracle had it's effect on many of the Jews, who immediately professed their belief in Jesus. But there were some, who went to the Pharisees, and gave them an account of what they had seen. On this the chief priests, and Pharisees, immediately called a council, to consider, what should be done with Jesus?
47. His miracles, they agreed, were undoubted; but if he were thus
48.

46. Here we have a most astonishing instance of that hardness of heart, which justifies our blessed Lord's remark: *If they hear not Moses, and the prophets; neither will they be persuaded, tho one rose from the dead.*

48. This is an instance of true political wisdom—*never to trust God with any event; but however contrary to justice, to follow the line of human prudence.*

suffered

suffered to go on; the people would rise in his favour; and the resentment of the Romans would of course follow.

Caiphas, the high priest, who presided in the council, said, It was easy to determine what to do. Whether Jesus were innocent, or guilty; his death was certainly a matter of expediency; and it was right, that he should die for the benefit of the whole people. This speech of the high-priest's was much taken notice of afterwards, as containing a kind of prophecy, that Jesus should die, though in a different sense from what he meant it, for the nation of the Jews: and not for that nation only; but for all the children of God, however dispersed over the face of the earth. 49. 50. 51. 52.

The council having determined therefore to put him to death, inquired next into the properest method of executing their designs. 53.

Jesus, in the mean time, to avoid their malice, retired privately to Ephraim, a town in the wilderness. 54.

Soon after, the passover was celebrated; and many Jews, according to custom, came to Jerusalem, before the feast, with a view to purify themselves properly for it, according to the law. Among all these strangers diligent search was made to find Jesus; for the chief priests had issued a strict order, that whoever knew where he was, should give immediate information to them. 55. 56. 57.

C H A P.
XII.
1. 2.

Jesus however instead of going directly to Jerusalem, went first to Bethany: where being invited to supper, Lazarus, who had been

55. The Jews could not enter the tabernacle, nor partake of the sacrifices, till they had been cleansed by the water of separation, and other ceremonies.

2. This seems to have been Simon's supper, mentioned Matt. xxvi. 6. As to Martha's serving in another person's house, it is probable, that these acts of good neighbourhood were common in Jewish villages. The chief difficulty is, with regard to Mary. All the evangelists mention this fact; but St. John is the only one, who specifies the person. If St. Luke alludes to the same fact, he represents a woman, as a sinner, whom from other passages in scripture, we had reason to believe of an irreproachable character.

3. raised from the dead, was one of the company; and Martha waited on them. Mary in the mean time bringing a box of very costly ointment, which spread an odour through the whole house, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair.

4. 5. At this Judas Iscariot taking great offence, said, It would have been much better to have sold the ointment, and to have given the produce of it to the poor.—Not that he had any regard for the poor; but he was a dishonest person; and as he carried the purse, and took out of it what he wanted for his own private occasions, he wished to have it as well replenished, as he could.

7. Jesus gave him a public rebuke; and commended Mary, who had piously anointed his body, as he said, for his approaching burial. 8. You have the poor, he added, always with you: but this is an extraordinary occasion.

9. As it was soon known, that Jesus was at Bethany, numbers of people resorted thither from Jerusalem, both to see him, and also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. This brought Lazarus also into danger from the chief priests; who, in their consultations, determined to put him likewise to death; as it was evident, that, through him, many of the Jews believed on Jesus.

12. Jesus was now become so respected by the people, that it was no sooner known, he was at Bethany, and intended to be at the passover; than crowds of people, who had come from all parts to Jerusalem, went out to meet him; carrying palm-branches in

3. This is the action to which the evangelist refers chap. xi. 2.

4. Judas Iscariot is supposed by many to be the son of that Simon, who entertained Jesus.

6. This is supposed by some interpreters to be the meaning of the original, *he bare what was put therein*; that is, *he took out, or purloined it.*

their hands, and crying, Blessed is the king of Israel, who cometh in the name of the Lord.

In this triumphant manner, riding upon an ass's colt, Jesus entered Jerusalem; fulfilling that prophecy of Zechariah, *Fear not daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.* His disciples however, at this time, recollected not the completion of the prophecy: but after his resurrection, their faith was greatly confirmed by it. The people, in the mean while, thought of nothing, but of the great miracle, which Jesus had performed in raising Lazarus from the dead; which was indeed the principal cause of their thronging together in such multitudes. The Pharisees therefore durst not at present, attempt to oppose a person of such popularity.

There happened to be, at this time, in Jerusalem, certain Greeks, who came, as many other foreigners did, to worship, during the solemnity of the passover, in the outward courts of the temple. These strangers having heard of the fame of Jesus, and being solicitous to see him, found out Philip; and desired him to carry them to his master. Accordingly Philip, and his brother Andrew, acquainted Jesus with their desire.—Jesus took the opportunity of these strangers inquiring after him to inform his disciples of that great event, when the gospel should be manifested, not only to a few Greeks, but to all the nations of the earth.—Yet as a grain of corn, said he, dies, before it produces its increase; so must the Son of man die also, before his doctrines are propagated. In the mean time, let me forewarn you

15. Zech. ix. 9, and the note on Matt. xxi. 9.

22. It does not appear from the text, that Jesus saw the Greeks; tho it is most probable he did. But the evangelist mentions them only as an introduction to what Jesus said, with regard to the future progress of the gospel through the world.

26, 27. to expect a time of trial. He who avoids the dangers, to which his religion leads him, for the sake of any worldly advantage, neglects his best interest. But if he follow my sufferings; he shall partake of my glory. Human nature, no doubt, is disturbed at suffering: I am myself inclined to say, Father, save me from this hour: but I know the end of my coming into the world, was to meet this hour.

28. Jesus then looking up to heaven, expressed, in a strong act of devotion, his intire resignation to the will of God. Glorify thy name, said he, O God, in me, as thou thinkest fit. On this an awful voice from heaven proclaimed; *I have already glorified it; and will exalt it with increasing glory.*

29. The people, who stood around, heard the voice; and some of them thought it was thunder. Others supposed, it was an angel that spake.

30. Jesus told them, that the miraculous voice they had heard, came not on his account: but as a testimony from heaven for their sakes; to convince them of the manifestation of the glory of God; which was speedily to take place—when the powers of darkness, said he, shall be restrained, and when I shall be
31. *lifted up*, and draw all nations unto me. In this Jesus
32. alluded to the *manner* of his death; and to the celebrated
33. type of the brazen serpent in the wilderness.

27. As all the pointing of the new testament is arbitrary, great alterations of the sense may often be introduced merely from different pointings; as in the instance of this verse. We read it; *What shall I say? Father save me from this hour.* &c. But it conveys a very different and a better sense, if it be pointed thus: *What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but, &c.*

29. Wetstein ingeniously conjectures on this passage; that the Greeks thought it thunder; but that the Jews, who understood the words, thought an angel spoke.

What

What Jesus had just said, brought on an inquiry from some of the Jews about the Messiah. The law spoke of Christ, as *abiding for ever*; and they wished to know how that was reconcilable with his being *lifted up*, or taken away? 34.

Jesus knowing that they asked the question with no good design, instead of a direct answer, gave them warning, not to neglect the present opportunity. They now, he told them, enjoyed the advantage of the light: but if they refused to walk in it, they should be left in that darkness, which they preferred. 35. 36.

Having said this, he left Jerusalem, and retired privately to Bethany.

Thus, notwithstanding the many miracles, which he wrought, numbers, who saw them, did not believe in him; according to the prediction of Isaiah, *Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* And indeed it was impossible, that such people, as Isaiah describes, when he foresaw the glorious manifestation of Christ's kingdom, could be disposed to believe the gospel: *You hear, says he, but understand not; you see, but perceive not. For the heart of this people is fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes shut, so that they see not with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their heart, that they may be converted, and I should heal them.* 37. 38. 39. 40. 41.

Notwithstanding, however, many of the principal Jewish rulers believed on him: but were too much blinded by the fashion of 42. 43.

34. From the words here used, it is evident, that the Jews considered the expression, *Son of man*, to belong to the Messiah, in the same manner as *Son of God*.

41. See Isa. vi. 9.

the world, and too much afraid of giving offence, to make a public confession of their faith.

44. 45. On another occasion, as Jesus was speaking to the people in general; he told them, that a belief in God, and in him, were so closely united, that it was hardly possible to believe in one, 46. without believing in the other. He who believeth in me, said he, shall find the glorious effects of being restored from darkness 47. 48. to light. But he, who doth not believe in me, tho he may live secure from any judgment here (for I came not at present to judge the world, but to save it) shall hereafter find himself called into judgment for rejecting that gospel, of which he once 49. had so gracious an offer; and which, if he be not hardened in 50. wickedness, he must acknowledge to have come from God; through whom I speak; and in whose name I publish everlasting life.

C H A P.
XIII.

1. 2. 3.

Jesus now knowing, that the time of his sufferings approached (for Judas he knew had determined to betray him) resolved, before he suffered, to give his disciples a proof of that humility, on which he laid so great a stress; and likewise an instance of that love for them, which he had ever shewn. He arose therefore 4. from supper; and turning his upper garment aside, girt himself 5. with a towel; and pouring water into a bason, began to wash the feet of his disciples. Coming in course to Peter, that disciple 6. would not suffer him to perform so mean an office for him. But 7. Jesus told him, he should afterwards, explain the reason of what

5. Barclay in his apology, (p. 467) contends, that washing feet is as much an ordinance of the gospel, as baptism, or the Lord's supper: and so the church of Rome seems nearly to consider it. But it appears plainly to have been intended by Jesus only as an example of humility to his disciples, just as, on another occasion, he set a little child before them. It has not the air of a divine ordinance—it is not mentioned in any other place; or by any other evangelist—nor was it conceived in that light by the early Christians.

he

he did. Peter however still refused. On this Jesus alluding to that purity of mind, of which washing was an emblem, replied, that if he washed him not, he should have no part with him. Peter entering into his master's allusion, wished, as that was the case, that not only his feet; but his whole body might be washed. Jesus still continuing the allusion, told him that, as a person thoroughly clean, might easily wipe off a little casual dirt, which he might receive in travelling; so a person well-grounded in his religion, would have only the common infirmities of nature to contend with.—But, added Jesus, notwithstanding you all ought to be in this state of purity; I know it is otherwise. This he spoke, alluding to that disciple, who, he knew, would betray him.

After Jesus had thus washed his disciples feet, he drew his garment again around him, and sat down. Then turning to them, I have now given you, said he, a great, and memorable instance of that humility of mind, which I have always pressed upon you, as the leading virtue of the gospel. If I have shewn such humility to you; you ought certainly to shew it, on all occasions, to each other. For whatever the master does, cannot be thought unworthy of the disciple. All these things I lay before you; and you listen to them: but happy only is he, who makes them the rule of his life. Yet notwithstanding all my precepts, and example, there is one among you, who will fulfill the scriptures by *lifting up his heel against me*. I mention this to you before it happen, that after it hath happened, it may be a new confirmation of your faith.—And be not alarmed, as if this desertion should render your preaching less exemplary, and convincing. I repeat to you, what I have before said, that the reception of you and your doctrine shall be al-

18. See Pf. xli. 9.

ways considered as the reception of me ; and likewise of Him, that sent me.

21. Jesus, having said this, appeared distressed, and again told his
22. disciples, that one of them should betray him. This threw them
23. 24. all into great anxiety ; and Peter beckoned to a favourite disciple,
who sat next to Jesus, to enquire whom he meant.

25. 26. Jesus intimated privately to that disciple, that it was he, to whom
he should give a sop, when he had dipped it in the dish ; which
he gave to Judas Iscariot.

27. Immediately after, Jesus perceiving, that Judas was now fully
determined to pursue the wicked intentions of his heart, said publicly
28. to him, What thou dost, do quickly. This was however under-
29. stood by no one at the table ; and was interpreted in different ways ;
some supposing, that, as Judas carried the purse, Jesus had him
make provision for the approaching feast ; others, that he ordered
30. him to give something to the poor. He went out however im-
mediately, under the cover of the night, which was then drawing
on.

31. 32. As soon as he was gone, Jesus said, The time now approaches,
when the great designs of God shall be completed by the sufferings,
and death of the Son of man ; and after that, by his glorious re-
33. surrection, and ascension. I shall now, my friends, be with you
only a little time longer ; and, as I said to the Jews, you can-
34. not follow me now. But I leave my instructions with you,
particularly

24. The words in the text, *lying on Jesus's breast*, allude only to the recumbent manner, in which the Jews, as well as other nations, disposed themselves, during a meal at table.

30. It is said in the text, *he then having received the sop, went immediately out* ; as if receiving the sop had been the cause. I apprehend it means only to mark the time.

34. The newness of the commandment consisted not in *loving one another* ; but in the *measure* of that love :—you are to love one another *as* I have loved you. It is not a small degree of
love,

particularly that great, and new commandment; that you love each other: not after the manner of the world; but after the example which I have given you with disinterested love: and let this be the great distinguishing mark of your being my disciples. 35.

Here Peter distressed at his master's saying, his disciples could not follow him *now*, asked him the reason. Jesus told them, that his own work was now over; theirs only just begun. They could not therefore follow him, till they had compleated *their* business, as he had compleated *his*. 36.

Peter told him, he should find no difficulty in following him now. I am ready, said he, even to lay down my life for your sake. 37.

Jesus thinking it right to check such confidence, told him, that so far from being ready to lay down his life for his sake, the cock should not crow, till he had three times denied him. 38.

C H A P.
XIV.
1.

Then consoling the sorrow, which his disciples discovered on his talking of leaving them, he bad them not be distressed; but have that confidence in him, which they had in God. The mansions of happiness, said he, in the next world, which are intended to receive me, are intended also to receive you; and all my faithful servants. I lead the way, and make preparation for you. Hereafter, in God's good time, I will receive you to myself; never to part again. Thus I have plainly discovered to you, both the place, you are to go to; and the way you are to go. 3.
4.

But the disciples, whose minds still ran on temporal things, did not clearly understand him; and Thomas, in particular, expressed his doubts both as to the place, and to the way. 5.

love, that will fulfill this precept. Among the ancient Christians, it was so known a badge of their profession, that it was commonly said by their heathen neighbours, *See how these Christians love one another.*

6. Jesus told him, that he himself was the way. No one, said
 7. he, can go to the Father; but through me. They, who know
 me, know the Father also. You know the Father, by being fully
 instructed in my doctrine.

8. If we could see the Father, said Philip, it would be a firm founda-
 tion for our faith.

9. Have I been now so long with you, said Jesus, and is not your
 faith yet sufficiently confirmed? If you have seen me, you have
 10. in effect, seen the Father. Believest thou not this? Believe my
 11. 12. doctrines—believe my miracles. You shall hereafter have even
 stronger proof. After I am ascended to my Father, you shall be
 enabled to perform even greater works, than any you have yet
 13. 14. seen performed. Nay, whatever you shall ask of God in my name,
 that is necessary to carry on the great work intrusted to you, you
 15. shall most certainly receive——But still remember, that the keep-
 ing of my commandments must be the only test of your love.
 16. On this depends your receiving the Holy Spirit, which I will
 pray to God to give you; and which will not leave you, as I do;
 17. but will continue with you through life. This is a heavenly aid,
 of which the corrupt world, not attending to spiritual things,
 knows nothing. You, in a degree, feel it in yourselves already;
 and it shall hereafter manifest itself in all its glorious operations.

18. 19. Thus, you see, I shall not leave you destitute. The world, in
 a little time, shall see me no more: but with you I shall always

10. As if our Saviour had said, My words are his—my works are his. By knowing therefore
 what I teach, and do, you know what the Father would wish to have taught, and done. There-
 fore by knowing me, you know him.

12. Our Saviour perhaps alludes here to the gift of tongues; or perhaps he uses only an
 hyperbolical mode of speaking, so common in the sacred writers. *Greater works* may stand for
great works.

16. Some of the Mahometan writers pretend, that this verse is a prophecy of the coming of
 Mahomet. The word *Mahomet* signifies *illustrious*; and the word *παρακλητον*, or *comforter*,
 they pretend has been altered by the Christians from the original word *πριμωτον*, *illustrious*.

18. The tender word *ορφανος* *orphans* is used in the original.

continue

continue to live. My life shall be the source of yours. And you shall then be assured, without any farther doubt, of that union, which subsists between you, and me; and between me, and the Father.—But all depends, as I have just told you, on observing these rules, and doctrines, which I have given you. This will shew your love to me; and your love to me will be the foundation of my Father's love to you; and of all those gracious manifestations, which I shall make to you hereafter. 20.

Judas the brother of James, interrupting Jesus, asked him, In what manner he meant to manifest himself to them in particular; and not to the world? 21.

Jesus told him, that not only they, but all who loved him, and kept his commandments, should experience these divine communications. But as his doctrine was his Father's also; they, of course, who obeyed him not, could have no communication with the Father.—During the time I have been with you, added Jesus, I have given you various doctrines, and precepts; many of which may have gone from you; but when I send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of God, into your hearts, he will bring to your remembrance every thing, that I have said to you.—And now I leave you under the full assurance, that the peace of God shall rest upon you; which is a different kind of peace from any the world knows: it will ease your distresses for me, and your apprehensions for yourselves. Indeed, if you truly loved me, you would rejoice at my departure; not only because I have promised to revisit you; but because I am going to an exalted state with my Father. These things I tell you, that hereafter when you see them fulfilled, your faith may be confirmed.—I have little time now to employ among 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30.

22. Judas's inquiry proceeded from a misconception of Jesus's meaning. Our Saviour spoke of his spiritual kingdom. Judas understood a temporal one.

31. you. The powers of darkness are now contriving their designs against me: and I am preparing to shew the world that last, great instance of my love; and of my submission to my Father's will.

From the room, where they were sitting, they now retired to the mount of Olives. Here Jesus taking occasion probably from the vineyards through which he passed, began again his discourse.

CHAP.
XV.

1. 2. I am the true vine, said he, and my Father is the husbandman.
3. 4. Every branch that beareth not fruit, he removeth; and every
5. branch, that beareth fruit, he pruneth; that it may bear more
6. abundantly. Among these fruit-bearing branches, I number you.
7. But you must ever remember, that all depends upon your being
8. firmly united to me; from whence all your nourishment springs.
9. As the branch cannot bear fruit, unless it adhere to the vine;
10. neither can you, unless you adhere to me. He who abideth not
11. in me, is cast out as a withered branch, fit only for the fire.
12. 13. Through this union with me, your prayers to God, become ef-
fectual; and by your obedience, in consequence of this union, his
name is glorified. My love to you is like the Father's to me.
14. Continue in it, and shew it by keeping my commandments, as I
keep his.
15. These things have I spoken unto you, that the joys, and comforts
of religion may rest upon you; and that they may increase more and
16. more; as you still improve in heavenly affections. Be ever careful
therefore to improve in yourselves those kind affections, of which I
have given you an example, by laying down my life for mankind.
While you thus continue to obey my precepts, you become my
friends. I call you not servants, but friends; communicating to you
every spiritual gift, which I have received from my Father. I
have received nothing from you; but have chosen you to preach my
religion in the world. In the prosecution of this work, whatever
you

you shall ask of God in my name, you shall receive. And finally be assured, that every thing I have said to you, points to this great lesson, that you love one another. 17.

Nor be surprized, if the world return your love with hatred. You see how it hath hated me. This only shews how opposite it's opinions are to those you have received from me. I have always told you, that the servant must not expect a better lot than his lord. They who persecute me, will persecute you: and they who listen to me, will listen also to you. It is on my account they persecute you; and their ignorance of God is the cause of their persecuting me. Had I not come to teach them; their ignorance had been excusable: but now they have no excuse. Their opposition, it is plain, proceeds from malice, and inveterate hatred. The miracles, which I have performed among them, could not have been rejected, if their affections had been right: so that their ignorance is turned into guilt. It is evident therefore, that in me is fulfilled, what the prophet says, *They hated me without a cause*. Notwithstanding however all this opposition, the Spirit of truth, which I shall send among you, after my departure, will raise up steady professors of the gospel; among whom, you also, who have been with me from the beginning, shall be the principal witnesses, and leaders. 18. 19. 20. 21. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27.

CHAP.
XVI.
1. 2. 3.

All these sufferings which you must needs undergo from irreligious men, I mention now to you, that you may not be surprized when they happen: and that a completion of what I tell you of my

18. Εμε πρωτον υμων μισησηκει might perhaps be better rendered, *It hated me your chief, or Lord*. Πρωτος is so translated in 1 Tim. i. 15.

24. *They had not had sin*; that is, they had not had that great sin, of which I accuse them—that of rejecting me, and flying in the face of God.

25. Pf. xxxv. 19.

2. *Whosoever killeth you, will think, that he doth God service*. See an effect of this religious zeal, Acts xxiii. 14. &c.

4. *sufferings*, may be a foundation for your faith in my *promises*. At first I did not mention these things to you, as you were then un-
5. 6. 7. prepared to receive them. And even now, you do not consider the blessed mansions, to which I am going; nor the Comforter, whom I cannot send to you, unless I go: but you consider only the
8. melancholy part; and are distressed merely because I am about to leave you; tho it is absolutely necessary, that the Comforter should come, not only on your account; but for the sake of the world.—
9. Of these great points he must make mankind sensible—of sin, which
10. is the cause of their rejecting me—of that justification, which they can only have through my death, and of which my resurrection is
11. a proof—and of a last judgment, in which a final sentence shall be passed upon all men.
12. I have still many things to say to you; which you are yet unable
13. to bear. But when the Spirit of truth is come, he will communicate
14. to you the whole truth. He will continue my designs by still
15. communicating to you more, and more of my intentions. Both his instructions and mine come immediately from God; and are therefore
16. intirely the same.—Jesus concluded with reminding his disciples, once more, of the shortness of the time he should be with them, and of his speedy return.
17. 18. But still, notwithstanding all the explanations, which he had given them of his death, and resurrection, they did not comprehend his meaning; but questioned each other privately about it.

4. See Matt. ix. 17.

9. 10. 11. These are difficult passages; and I dare hardly suppose, I have hit the true meaning of them.—*The prince of this world* seems to be an expression merely denoting the power of sin, which shall then receive it's final doom.

12. See again Matt. ix. 17.

16. Jesus might, in these expressions, have had an eye both to his being seen after his resurrection; and likewise to a future judgment.

Jesus knowing their anxiety, told them, that as to the first of these events, it would certainly occasion grief to *them*; as well as triumph to their *enemies*: but their sorrow, like that of a woman in travel, should be turned into joy—a joy of a more lasting nature, than their sorrow had been—such a joy, as should never be taken from them. After that time, said Jesus, I shall no longer instruct you in person. Instead of applying to me, you shall apply directly to the Father, in my name; which you have never yet done; and your petitions will be answered. All obscure intimations will be unnecessary; and the truth shall be set plainly before you. Nor is it needful for me to pray for you. The Father himself loveth you. Your faith, and love, have given you favour before him. You may assure yourselves therefore (to sum up what I have been saying) that as I came from the Father, when I came into the world; so I shall go again to the Father, when I leave it.

19. 20. 21.
22.
23.
24.
25.
26.
27.
28.

The disciples replied, they now perfectly understood him—they were now convinced he knew all things; and were fully established in their belief.

29. 30.

Do you now believe? said Jesus: but be not so confident of your own strength. Within a very little while, you shall all be terrified, and scattered from me. Not that I want any human assistance: but I should wish to caution you against presumption.

31. 32.

Thus, I have given you sufficient ground of comfort. In this world you must expect your trials; but follow my steps: I have overcome the world. My example will lead you to peace, and happiness.

33.

30. The circumstance, perhaps, which struck the disciples, was, that Jesus should know, without being told (see verse 19) what they wanted to ask him: their case was like that of Nathaniel, chap. i. 49.

1.

Jesus having finished his discourse to his disciples, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and broke into this fervent prayer.

2. 3. 4. O holy Father, the important hour is come. Let it now be
5. seen, that thou, and I have glorified each other. That great work
6. 7. 8. of establishing salvation through faith in Thee, and me, I have
9. 10. finished. And now receive me into that eternal glory, which I
11. enjoyed with Thee before the foundation of the world. To all,
12. who were disposed to receive the truth, I have discovered it. I
13. 14. have set before them thy will: I have discovered to them that
15. doctrine of salvation, which I have received from Thee; and they
16. have believed it.—For these I put up my first petitions—these,
17. who are consecrated as thine, and mine. As I am now about to
18. leave them, O holy Father, preserve them in that faith, and truth,
19. which they have received; that they may continue united with
20. 21. us. While I was with them on earth, I preserved them; and have
lost none; but the son of perdition. And now I come to Thee,
I leave comfort with them, in the midst of those trials, which they
shall meet with for the sake of the truth. I pray not, Almighty
Father, that thou wouldst remove them out of the world; but that
thou wouldst preserve them safe through the trials of it. They,
as I, belong not to it. Sanctify them, O God, through the truth
of thy holy word. As thou hast sent me into the world; so I
send them; and prepare them through my doctrine, and sufferings,
to propagate the truth.

Neither do I pray for them alone, but for all, whom they shall
bring to the knowledge of thy holy gospel: that we may all be

9. The expression in the original, *I pray for them, I pray not for the world*, seems, I think, to be generally misunderstood. Our Saviour did not mean, I should suppose, to exclude *the world* from his prayers; but only to pray *first* for his chosen few. He afterwards (ver. 20.) prays for the *rest of the world*. See a similar expression John x. 16.

united in love, and draw the unbelieving world to thy truth, that I may finally communicate to all my followers, that eternal glory, which thou hast given to me—that we may all be united together; and Thy love may rest on them, as it does on me. Thus finally, O heavenly Father, grant, that all, whom Thou hast given me, may ever be with me; and partake of that glory, which I enjoyed before the foundation of the world. And tho the world hath not known Thee; yet I, who have known Thee, have made Thee manifest unto my faithful servants; that the love, which Thou hast shewn to me, may rest on them.

22. 23.

24.

25. 26.

C H A P.
XVIII.

Jesus having finished his prayer, passed with his disciples over the brook Cedron, and retired to a part of the mount of Olives called Gethsemane.

Gethsemane was well known to the disciples, as a place, where Jesus frequently resorted. Here therefore Judas, who had now settled his wicked designs with the chief priests, led a band of officers, and foldiers to seize Jesus. It was night, when the armed men with lanterns, and torches, entered the place.

2.

3.

Jesus, knowing that his time of suffering was now come, did not avoid his enemies, as he had sometimes done; but went up to them; and inquired whom they sought? Upon their answering, that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, he told them, He was the person.

4. 5.

The dignity, with which he spoke, had such an effect upon them, that they retired back, undetermined what to do.

6.

Jesus repeating the question, and receiving the same answer, told them, that if he was the only person they sought, his followers

7. 8. 9.

1. The brook Cedron took it's name from a dark gloomy valley (which *Cedron* signifies) through which it ran.

9. See chap. xvii. 12.

might have liberty to escape: Thus fulfilling what he had just said, *Of those that thou gavest me, have I lost none.*

10. The disciples, in the mean time, seeing violence intended, began to prepare resistance: and Peter particularly drawing a sword, wounded a servant of the chief priest's, whose name was Malchas.

11. But Jesus checked this violence, saying, The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12. The soldiers therefore, having recovered themselves, seized him,

13. and binding him, led him first to Annas, the father-in-law of

14. Caiphas the high-priest, who had made that speech with regard

15. 16. 17. to the *expediency of one man's dying for the people.* To him Annas
18. 19. 20. immediately sent him.
21. 22. 23.
24.

During this time, all the disciples, except Peter, and one more, had dispersed themselves. These two followed the croud; and the latter of them being known to the high-priest, entered the palace; and soon after obtained permission for Peter to enter.

12. St. John is the only evangelist, who calls one of the officers, who commanded on this occasion, • *χιλιαρχος*, which was the title of a Roman officer. St. Luke speaks of the *στρατηγος το ιερου*, or *captains of the temple*, who were those priests, who superintended the watches, which were set round it. But it is plain from St. John, that Roman soldiers were in the company; and it is probable, that the whole detachment, was under the command of a Roman officer, from the castle of Antonia.

15. It is generally supposed, that this *other disciple* was John: but it seems very unlikely, that he, who was a Galilean, and an obscure fisherman, could be so familiar a footing with the high-priest. It is rather probable, that the person, who introduced Peter, was not one of the twelve; but some disciple of a higher rank; who had joined Jesus's company.

21. Bp. Lowth, in his commentary on Isaiah liii, 8, mentions, from the Mishna, a custom among the Jews, of proclaiming a criminal's offence before he suffered; that if any body could bear witness to his innocence, he might be allowed to do it. The Bishop supposes, that our Saviour alludes here to this privilege, which was denied him.

22. Our blessed Saviour's being struck in this way, in a court of justice, shews, either that there was great indecorum among the Jews, in the administration of justice; or great partiality, and malice, if this behaviour was particular to our Saviour's case.

As the door opened, a servant-maid looking steadily at Peter, said, he was certainly one of Jesus's disciples. But Peter firmly denying it, mixed immediately with the servants, who were warming themselves at the fire.

In the mean time, Jesus stood before the high-priest; who questioned him closely with regard to his disciples, and his doctrines.

Jesus told him, his doctrines were not taught in secret; but propagated openly in the synagogues, and in the temple. He might call witnesses on that head from every part.

As he spake this, one of the officers, who stood by, struck him on the face for answering the high-priest with such irreverence.

If I have spoken any thing improper, said Jesus, bear witness of it. If not, for what reason am I struck?

While the high-priest was thus questioning Jesus, Peter continued with the servants at the fire, one of whom observing him, said, he was surely one of Jesus's disciples, which Peter again denied.

25.

Soon after, another person, a relation of him, whom Peter had wounded, said, You were certainly in the garden with Jesus, when he was taken. But Peter strenuously denied his having been there.—Soon after the cock crew.

26.

27.

As the Jewish Sanhedrim had not the power of life, and death, their present business was only to procure matter of accusation against

28.

28. Our Saviour had eaten the passover the night before, which seems to have been the precise time appointed in Ex. xii. 6, 8. But the great numbers who came to Jerusalem at the passover

against Jesus. Very early in the morning therefore he was carried from the palace of Caiphas; before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. But as it was the day before the passover, the chief priests did not enter the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled.

29. Pilate therefore went out to them, and asked them, What accusation they brought against Jesus?

30. 31. From their answer, he plainly perceived, they had nothing criminal to alledge against him; and supposing he had been guilty only of some trivial transgression of their law, bad them try him themselves.

But they assured him, it was a criminal matter; and they had therefore no right to try him.

32. Thus by throwing the trial into the hands of the Romans, whose custom it was to crucify malefactors; the Jews unknowingly fulfilled those prophecies, which Jesus himself had delivered, with regard to the manner of his death.

33. Pilate therefore, who had now been informed of Jesus's claims to regal power, called him again before him; and asked him, what he had to say in answer to that accusation?

34. Jesus told him, it was a charge, raised on a false interpretation of his words.

35. Pilate said, that he himself understood not the nice distinctions of their words; but that they, who should best understand them,

passover, made it necessary to allow more time; and it was usual for the Jews, when the country became populous, to continue the passover from thursday evening, till friday evening; see a note on Matt. xxvi. 20. The number of Jews on these festivals, at Jerusalem, was so great, that when Cestius made a public inquiry, he found that the lambs killed at one passover, amounted to two million, fifty-six thousand, five hundred. Bel. Jud. VI.

32. See chap. iii. 14, and chap. xii. 32.

the

the rulers of his nation, had accused him. What is the interpretation, continued he to Jesus, which you give?

Jesus told him, that his kingdom was of a spiritual nature—very different from the kingdoms of this world. If I had pretended, said he, to any earthly kingdom, I should have raised an army, like other princes of the world, to have opposed my enemies.

36.

You are then a king, said Pilate?

In one sense, answered Jesus, I am: and to the truth of this spiritual kingdom, which God is now establishing in the world, I come to bear witness; of which all who are disposed to listen to the truth will be members.

37.

Pilate carelessly asking him, What he meant by truth? went out to the chief priests; and told them, he found nothing criminal in the person, they had brought before him.—But you have a custom, said he, that I should release to you a prisoner at the passover, shall I therefore release the king of the Jews?

38.

39.

To this all cried out in strong terms of opposition; requesting, that he would rather release one Barabbas—a very notorious offender; who was, at that time, in prison for sedition, and murder.

40.

37. Συ λέγεις; ὅτι βασιλεὺς εἶμαι ἐγώ: The text thus pointed, the translation would run, *Thou sayest true: for I am a king.*

38. We have a good comment on this verse in the following lines.

—What is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To Truth itself, that deigned him no reply:
And wherefore? Will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely: 'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature to impart:
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer; not a spark.

Cowper's Task.

Pilate

1. Pilate however hoping to pacify the Jewish priests by a gentler
2. punishment, ordered Jesus to be scourged; and the soldiers, into
whose hands he was given, added derision, and ill usage to the
punishment. They put a crown of thorns on his head, and dressing
3. him in a purple robe, fell down before him, saluting him as a king.
4. 5. Then in contempt, they smote him on the face. Pilate entering
into the ridicule, and hoping, that it might have it's effect on the
chief priests, brought out Jesus to them in that ridiculous dress;
and told them he had given him all the punishment, which he
6. thought he deserved. But the chief priests and officers clamoured
loud to have him crucified.

Pilate told them, he must leave it then to them; for he found
no fault in him.

7. By their law, the Jews answered, he certainly deserved death,
for he pretended to be the Son of God.
8. 9. This rather alarming Pilate, he carried him again into the judg-
ment-hall; and questioned him much of his origin: but received
no answer.
10. Pilate surprized at this, asked Jesus, Why he treated him with
such neglect? Do you not know, said he, that I have the power
of life and death over you?

1. This account seems to differ from that of the other evangelists, who mention these circumstances *after* his condemnation. And yet, that Pilate used this chastisement by way of satisfying the Jews, seems probable from Luke xxiii. 16.

3. See the notes, in Matt. xxvii, on the crown of thorns, and behaviour of the Roman soldiers.

7. The Jews held this language, because Judea, tho a Roman province, was governed, under the Romans, by it's own laws.

8. Some suppose, that Pilate was the *more afraid*, lest Jesus might be some demi-god. Others think, that as the Jews were so very tenacious of their religious rites, Pilate was afraid, if he did not condemn Jesus, it might occasion a sedition.

You could have no power at all over me, said Jesus, unless God
for his own wife purposes had allowed it: but their sin, who
delivered me into your hands, is greater than yours. 11.

This speech determined Pilate to release Jesus. But the Jewish
priests cried out with vehemence, If you release this person, you
cannot be well-inclined to Cæsar. Whoever declares himself a
king, opposes Cæsar. 12.

This was touching Pilate in a tender part; for Tiberius, the
Roman emperor, was, of all princes, the most jealous in his temper;
and the most apprehensive of a rival. Pilate therefore alarmed
at this, sat down in a portico, which was called in Hebrew Gab-
batha, from it's being a *raised pavement*, and ordering Jesus again
before him, he endeavoured to turn the idea, which had been
suggested to him, into derision, by presenting Jesus to the people,
under the name of *their king*. On this the chief priests, with
great vehemence cried out, Away with him; away with him:
crucify him. 13. 14. 15. 16.

What! said Pilate, shall I crucify your king?

The chief priests replied, We have no king but Cæsar.

Pilate at length gave way to the tumult, and delivered Jesus
into their hands.

It was about six o'clock in the morning when they led him to
execution; making him bear his cross. 17.

At a place called Golgotha, they crucified him; and to increase
the ignominy, they crucified a malefactor on each side of him. 18.

14. The difficulty with regard to the mode of reckoning time, between John and the other evangelists, is commonly reconciled by supposing that they followed the Jewish mode; and John, who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, followed the Roman.—This however does not set to rights all the little difficulties, with regard to time; which occur among the several evangelists.

19. 20. Upon the cross Pilate had placed an inscription in three languages, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE
 21. KING OF THE JEWS. But it gave offence to the chief priests, and they desired Pilate to write only, *who pretended to be*
 22. *king of the Jews*. But Pilate refused to make any alteration.
23. 24. In the mean time, the soldiers divided his garments among them; but his inner coat, being without a seam, they would not rend it; but cast lots for it; thus remarkably fulfilling that prophecy in the psalms, *They parted my garments among them; and for my vesture they cast lots*.
25. 26. 27. During this melancholy scene, the mother of Jesus, with some other women, who had attended him, stood by his cross. Jesus seeing John near them, recommended his mother to his particular care. He took her home therefore, and kept her with him, while he lived.
28. Jesus knowing, that every thing relating to his life and death, was now fulfilled, to accomplish the last prophecy which mentioned *their giving him vinegar to drink*, complained of thirst. On this
 29. one of the soldiers dipped a sponge in vinegar, mixed with hyssop,
 30. and putting it at the end of a reed, reached it to his mouth. Jesus tasting it, said, It is finished; and bowing his head, expired.

24. Pf. xxii. 28.

29. The text says, *put it upon hyssop*; and commentators explain it, by saying hyssop grows, in the east, with a long stem, like a reed. But vinegar, and hyssop, (which was in frequent use among the Jews, see Ex. xii. 22. Levit. xiv. 4. Num. xix. 16) made together a medicated draught, often given to criminals. In this passage, it appears, as if a bunch of hyssop was laid upon a piece of sponge, and dipped in vinegar. The reed is not mentioned, but supposed. In Pliny's natural history (XXIII. 1.) we have the vinegar, the sponge, and the bunch of hyssop brought together, tho on a different occasion.—*Calidum acetum, in spongia appositum, adjecto hyssopi fasciculo, medetur sedis vitiis*.—See also lib. XIV. 16.

In the mean time, the Jews, not knowing, that Jesus was dead, and wishing the bodies to be removed before the sabbath, (which being in the passover week, was a sabbath of more than ordinary solemnity) begged Pilate to order the legs of the criminals to be broken; that if there should be any remains of life in them, on their being taken down sooner than usual, they might not be able to escape. The soldiers accordingly broke the legs of the two criminals, who were executed with Jesus; but finding, that Jesus himself was certainly dead, they thought it unnecessary to break his legs: one of them however, thrust a spear into his side; from which issued blood, and water. 31. 32. 33. 34.

All these circumstances the writer of this account himself saw; and bears testimony to the truth of them. On the two last he lays a particular stress; the former compleating that prophetic type of the paschal lamb; *of which a bone was not to be broken*: and the latter fulfilling a prophecy of Zachariah; *they shall look on him, whom they have pierced*. 35. 36. 37.

At Arimathea lived a person of some consequence, whose name was Joseph. He was a disciple of Jesus; but through fear of the Jews, had kept his opinions to himself. At his master's death however he assumed new courage; and gave a noble instance of his faith. In the midst of all that ignominy, and general disappointment, which overwhelmed the cause of Jesus, during the short period between his death, and resurrection, this man, preserving his faith intire, went boldly to Pilate, and begged leave to take 38.

34. Anatomists observe, that from the appearance both of blood, and water, it was plain the heart was pierced; and of course, that Jesus was dead.

36. Ex. xii. 46.

37. Zech. xii. 10.

- the body from the cross, that it might not be disgraced by being
 39. cast out among common malefactors. In this pious office he was
 assisted by Nicodemus, another secret disciple; who brought with
 him a large quantity of spices, such as were used commonly in
 40. embalming. These two took the body from the cross; and as it
 41. 42. was late in the evening before the sabbath, and they were pressed
 for time; they wrapped it up only in linen with the spices, in-
 tending afterwards to embalm it properly. Having done this, they
 laid it in a new sepulchre, in a garden, near the place of execution;
 where it lay during the sabbath.

C H A P.
XX.

1. 2.

3.

4. 5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

On the morning after, very early, Mary Magdalen, who had seen
 where the body had been deposited, went to the sepulchre, and
 found the stone removed, which had been fitted to it's mouth. At
 this she was greatly disturbed; and ran to tell Peter, and John,
 what she had seen; who immediately hastened to the sepulchre.
 John arriving first, looked in, and saw the linen cloaths lying in
 order. Peter coming afterwards, entered the sepulchre, and saw
 the cloaths lying, as John had described them; and the napkin
 folded by itself, which had been bound round the head. John
 also then went in, and comparing all things together, began to be
 convinced, that Jesus was risen: for of that *full conviction*, which
 he might have had from the prophets, he had yet no idea.—With

39. *About an hundred pounds weight*, says the text. This was indeed a very large quantity. But the Jews estimated their respect, by the quantity of spices used in embalming the body of the deceased. Wetstein quotes a passage from the Talmud, in which it is said, that eighty pounds of spices were used at the funeral of Gamaliel.—Bowyer substitutes a reading, which makes the sense thus; *a mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about a pound each*.—But the Jews used sometimes, not only to anoint the body, but to lay it in a bed of spices: see 2 Chron. xvi. 14, where the funeral of Asa is described.

1. The Jewish sabbath was saturday. *The morning after*, therefore answers to our sunday; which from the great event of Christ's resurrection became the Christian sabbath.

this

this imperfect information, the two disciples returned to their brethren.

After they were gone, Mary, who still continued in great affliction about the place, went again to the sepulchre; and looking in, saw two angels sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body had lain. On their inquiry into the cause of her distress, she told them her great disappointment at not finding the body. Then turning from the sepulchre, she saw Jesus himself standing before her; but did not know him. Jesus asked her the cause of her sorrow? She supposing him to be the gardener, desired only to know where he had laid the body, if he had taken it away; and she would remove it.

Jesus looking steadily at her, said Mary!

On this she instantly knew him, and falling down at his feet, cried out, in a transport of joy, My Master, and my Lord!

Jesus said, do not now delay me, you shall have other opportunities of seeing me before my ascension. But go now to my brethren; and tell them, that I am risen from the dead; and shall speedily ascend to that gracious God, who will be their Father, as well as mine.

11. There is much difficulty in reconciling St. John's account of Mary, with the accounts of the other evangelists. They all agree, that Mary saw the angels: but they differ as to the point of time. Nor do I see, how this matter can be reconciled with any appearance of probability. We are constrained therefore, I think, in this passage, as in many others, to allow the variations of the evangelists in trifling matters; and consider them only as attentive to the *grand points* they had in view. See a note on Matt. 'xxviii. 1.

17. *Go to my brethren, &c.* There is something inexpressibly tender in this speech. Notwithstanding their late shameful desertion of him, he, (who knew *the spirit was willing, tho the flesh was weak*) sends to them in the kindest manner, and never touches more on their fault. Just so the prodigal son was received. Luke xx.

On

18. 19. On the evening of that very day, (the first day of the week,) on which Mary had told these things to the disciples, as they were assembled privately for fear of the Jews, Jesus stood in the
 20. midst of them, and having blessed them, shewed them his hands, and his side; which fully convinced them of the reality of his
 21. appearance; and threw them into an ecstasy of joy. He then blessed them again, and told them, he sent them into the world to continue that gracious work of preaching the gospel, which
 22. his Father had intrusted to him: adding, with a significant sign
 23. of breathing on them, a repetition of the promises of the Holy Ghost, and of the power of proclaiming remission of sins on the terms of the gospel.

24. It happened, that Thomas was not with the disciples, when
 25. Jesus first appeared to them. On his being informed therefore of it, he declared, that he would not believe it, unless he himself should be an eye-witness; and should see the prints of the nails in his hands, and of the spear in his side.

22. The sign of *breathing on them* was significant, like other signs, in expressing, as nearly as could be adapted to our conceptions, the operation intended. Thus in another passage, *The wind bloweth, &c. so is every one that is born of the spirit.*—We cannot suppose this is meant as an *actual giving* of the Holy Ghost, which was formally given afterwards; but must refer only to that future time.

25. All these particulars of the resurrection of Jesus, and of the transactions afterwards, are told in the original with that genuine simplicity, which evinces truth; and which no other mode of relation can equal. For the sake of uniformity however, I am constrained to adopt a more modern mode of expression.

25. Βαλω τοι δακτυλον εις should not be rendered, *thrust my hands into*; but rather, *lay my finger upon*.

A week

A week after, when the disciples were again assembled in the same private manner, and Thomas with them; Jesus, as before, appeared among them, and blessed them. He then gave Thomas the testimony he required; and bad him be no longer incredulous. Thomas, fully convinced, cried out in all the earnestness of faith, My Lord, and my God!

Thomas, said Jesus, thou hast believed in my resurrection, because thou hast seen me; but it is not every one who can have such evidence. Blessed is he, who can ground his faith on such testimony, as the wisdom of God thinks proper to vouchsafe.

Other evidences of his resurrection Jesus afforded his disciples; which are not here taken notice of. But these are a sufficient ground for our faith in Christ, as the Messiah.

26. *And after eight days*—that is, according to the Jewish reckoning, on the first day of the week, or our Sunday.

28. As a comment on this passage, I shall transcribe the following observations from a very valuable book.

“ When Thomas, overcome by the evidence our Lord had given him, and melted by his condescension, broke out, in the language of true faith, into that exclamation, My Lord, and my God! Thomas, replied our Lord, thou hast believed, because thou hast seen me: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.—This passage demands all our attention. Had faith sprung from any inward impression, Thomas might as well have believed before this sensible conviction, as after it. But he withheld his assent, till it was extorted from him by the evidence of his senses. Upon which our Lord’s remark is, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* That is, the ordinary means of blessing mankind with the knowledge of the Christian faith, will be by that evidence, which thou hast resisted—the testimony of well-informed witnesses. The evidence of sense is indeed given to a few, that they may be my chosen witnesses to the rest of the world: but this kind of evidence cannot be imparted to all: the work of general conversion must be carried on by rational, and historical evidence.—It must be acknowledged that this occurrence is extremely remarkable; and seems to have been disposed by our Lord on purpose to lay open to us, in one striking incident, the whole doctrine of the origin of faith.” Rotheram’s Essay on Faith, p. 88.

I may add that this verse (28) is always considered as a strong argument in favour of the divinity of our Saviour.

30. Some suppose the evangelist to have concluded his gospel at this chapter; but there seems to be no ground for the supposition; except that it appears his gospel *might* have concluded very well here.

After.

After this, when the disciples met Jesus, as he had appointed them, in Galilee, he discovered himself to them in this manner.

2. 3. 4. As Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, with Thomas, Nathaniel, and two other disciples, had been exercising their calling of fishing on the lake of Tiberias; after a toilsome night, they were drawing near the shore. There Jesus stood; but was not seen distinctly enough to be known. Finding they had taken nothing, he bad them cast the net on the right side of the boat; which having done, they inclosed so great a quantity of fish, that they were scarce able to drag them.

5. 6. John immediately turning to Peter, said, it is the Lord. On 7. 8. 9. 10. which Peter, girding his coat about him, threw himself into the 11. 12. 13. sea; while the other disciples came to shore in the boat dragging the net, which was not broken, notwithstanding the great number of fishes, which it inclosed.

On their landing they found a fire, and preparations for a meal; which was furnished from the fish they had taken. But the disciples were under such awe, and reverence at his presence, that none of them, tho they well knew him, durst accost him as their master.—This was the third time, that Jesus had shewn himself, in a public manner, to his disciples, since his resurrection.

14.

7. It is pleasing and instructive to see that eager zeal, which St. Peter, impressed probably with a sense of his late denial, shews on this occasion, beyond any of the other disciples; tho indeed he appears, on all occasions, to be of a warmer temper.

11. The text says, *full of great fishes, a hundred, and fifty, and three*. With regard to the *greatness* of some of the fish, which are found in this lake, Hafslequist speaks of one species, called the Charmud, or Karmud, which weighs often thirty pounds—It is *curious* also, tho not otherwise remarkable, that Oppian, in his poem on fishing, mentions this precise number, as all the kinds of fish, with which he was acquainted.

After

After they had eaten, Jesus, alluding to Peter's late denial of him, asked Whether his affection to him was now superior to all worldly things? And this question he put three times to him; bidding him, after each confession, Feed his flock. Peter expressed his unhappiness at his master's repeating the question: on which Jesus informed him, that he should hereafter be a great light in the Christian world; and should finally glorify God by laying down his life for the gospel. The very manner of his death Jesus pointed out, by alluding to his stretching out his hands to him; when he left the boat. Your hands, said he, shall hereafter be stretched out against your will; and another shall gird you, and carry you whither you would not.

Jesus then bidding his disciples follow him, Peter turned round, and observing John near his master, asked, What should become of him?

If I chuse, answered Jesus, to have him wait till I come, what is that to you: follow you me.

This ambiguous answer gave occasion to an opinion, that, that disciple should never die. But Jesus's speech really conveyed no such meaning; but was only a gentle rebuke to Peter for his curiosity.

The disciple, about whom Peter asked the question, is the writer of this gospel; and his testimony may be depended on as

15. *Lovest thou me, more than these?* Some interpret this passage, as if Jesus had said, *more than these disciples love me?* But this would have been a question, which Peter could not possibly have answered.

17. The allegorist says, Jesus asked the question three times, alluding to the minister's three-fold office of preaching, prayer, and a holy life. Others say, Christ obliged him to these three confessions, for his three denials. Perhaps nothing more was intended, than an earnest manner of speaking.

18. We have the authority of antiquity for supposing, that Peter was crucified.

25. true. But he means not to give an account of every thing, that Jesus said, and did ; which would engage him in a work too great for any man to attempt.

25. Some offended at this hyperbolical mode of speaking, say the sense will allow the words to mean, *the world could not receive, (or comprehend) the books, &c.* But I think this is refinement. Many other expressions, in the sacred writers, as highly figurative as this, might be produced.

END OF THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

A C T S O F T H E A P O S T L E S.

WE have seen, in the gospels, an account of the life, and death of our blessed Saviour. The Acts of the Apostles, on which we now enter, give us an account of the progress of christianity after his ascension.

This history is supposed to have been written by St. Luke; for which supposition we have every evidence, which a point, not absolutely certain, can possess. It bears the marks of his pen; and all the writers of antiquity mention it as his; Clemens, Polycarp, Irenæus, Origen, and Eusebius*.

To this history it hath been objected, that it does not answer its title. It is called the *Acts of the Apostles*: but it gives us only the history of *one* of them; and that not compleat.—In a good degree this is true: but in the first place, it does not appear, that this was its original title. It is rather probable, that it was of later date; and that as the gospels contained the *Acts of Christ*, this book in contrast, was inscribed the *Acts of the Apostles*.—But the title is of little moment: it is enough, if the history gives us all the knowledge on the subject we want.

Now the great point, which seemed wanting in the history of the gospel, was its connection with the Gentiles. The evangelists had given

* See Dr. Whitby's preface to the Acts of the Apostles.

us the history of our blessed Lord; and his opening the gospel to the Jews. But it would have been too great a chasm in the sacred story, if after all the prophecies in favour of the Gentiles, we had been indebted to prophane history alone for our accounts of their conversion. As St. Paul therefore was the great apostle of the Gentiles, the history of his life was the history also of this great revolution in the church. So far therefore seems true, that the history, which we call the *Acts of the apostles*, might more properly have been inscribed, *The history of the conversion of the Gentiles*.

But besides the very interesting light, in which this record appears, as a valuable piece of church-history; there is another, in which it must recommend itself to all christians; and that is, as a very strong proof of the truth of the christian religion. Our Saviour chose his disciples from the lowest stations of life: he chose such instruments, as were the least likely, on worldly principles, to compleat his designs. During his life-time, they followed their master indeed; but they followed him with supine hearts. They were impressed neither by the sublimity of his instructions, nor by the force of his example. Innocence of life was all they could pretend to. Nor wholly to this; for jealousies, and worldly prejudices of different kinds had strong possession of them. They had no idea of the great work of redemption; but a very strong one of temporal grandeur. When Jesus intrusted them in some noble theme, their thoughts were generally occupied on some worldly meditation: and with a simplicity bordering on weakness, they mistook every thing their master said.—The free-thinker displays his wit on these frequent mistakes of the disciples; and thinks they might at least have been concealed, for the honour of *the early propagators of the gospel*. We think otherwise. We think the behaviour of the disciples was the natural behaviour of men of their character; and the recording of such behaviour was no more, than was justly to be expected from honest men, who were concerned for every thing, that concerned the truth; which this eminently did. Such instruments were plainly unequal to the work of propagating a new religion; and their weaknesses were recorded by themselves, to shew they did not pretend to be equal to it. If they had concealed
their

their weaknesses; they would so far have lessened the evidences of the gospel.

Let us now see the behaviour of these same men, as exhibited in the *Acts of the apostles*. Those worldly ideas, which had before taken such possession of their hearts, were now totally renounced. They no longer contended, which of them should be the greatest. True christian humility, a total indifference to the things of this world, and a serene, heavenly-mindedness, became the distinguished parts of their several characters. Instead of that gross ignorance, that constant mistaking of their master's instructions; their minds were suddenly illumined; they saw clearly the truth; they had just conceptions of the whole scheme of redemption; and an amazing power in impressing the doctrines of it on the minds of others. Fears, and apprehensions no longer threw difficulties in their way: no efforts of their enemies; not even death itself in all its terrors, could affright them from their duty.

When therefore we see these same men represented under these different characters; and almost instantly changed from one character into the other, what are we to think? How can we account for it? Or how can it rationally be accounted for, unless by supposing they acted under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which their Master had promised to send them after his ascension?—Among the strong evidences therefore in proof of the christian religion, this certainly deserves a very distinguished place.

T A B L E o f C O N T E N T S.

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 Matthias is chosen an apostle, 317—descent of the holy Ghost,
 318—Opposition of the Jews: Peter's apology; and its beneficial
 effects, 318—First persecution of the christian church, 321—Una-
 nimity,

nimity, and charity of the christian church: the exemplary punishment of Ananias, and Sapphira, 325—Second attempt of the sanhedrim against the apostles, 327—The election of the seven deacons, 328—The apology, and death of Stephen, 329—Persecution, and flight of the church at Jerusalem, 334—Settlement of the church at Samaria, with the transaction of Simon Magus, 334—Philip's transaction with the Ethiopian, 335—The conversion of Saul, 336—Peter visits the churches, 339—and restores Tabitha, 340—The conversion of Cornelius, 340—Settlement of the church at Antioch, 344—Herod's persecution; and the miraculous deliverance of Peter, 345—The circuit of Paul and Barnabas through the churches of the lesser Asia, 347—The decree made at Jerusalem, to absolve the Gentiles from the use of Jewish ceremonies, 353—An account of Paul's circuit through several parts of Asia, Greece, and Syria, 358—History of Apollos, 367—Transactions of Paul at Ephesus, 368—Paul's last circuit through Greece, and Asia to Jerusalem, 371—The opposition, and persecution he met with at Jerusalem, 377—He is sent prisoner to Cæsarea, where he is tried before Felix the Roman governor, 382—He is tried before Festus, and appeals to Cæsar, 386—makes his apology before Agrippa, 388—his voyage, and shipwreck on the isle of Malta, 391—Circumstances, which happened there, 394—St. Paul's voyage, and journey to Rome, 396—Circumstances, which happened there, 397.

ACTS of the APOSTLES.

WHAT I have already written, Theophilus, contains an account of the life, and doctrine of Jesus Christ, till the time of his ascension; including the forty days, which he continued with his disciples, from his resurrection; in which he gave them infallible proofs of the reality of that event. At that time also he instructed them not to leave Jerusalem, till they should receive the Holy Ghost; reminding them, of what they had heard him say, that John baptized only with water; but that he should baptize them with the Holy Spirit of God.

C H A P.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4.

5.

6.

So little however did they, at that time, understand these things, that after the great event of his resurrection, they asked him,

1. *To begin to do a thing*, has been shewn by many good critics to be a Greek idiom for *doing it*.

6. Dr. Clarke rather supposes, that the disciples were not quite so gross in their ideas, as to expect a mere *temporal kingdom*; but rather that *great restoration*, which it was supposed the Messiah would effect.—Be it, as it will, it was a *curious* question, and could administer no instruction *to them*; tho the relation of the case is very instructive *to us*. *It is not for you*, said our Saviour, *to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath reserved in his own hands*: intimating by this gentle, but evasive answer, that altho an inquiry into these curious matters, could not well be considered among *very blameable things*; yet it certainly deserved *no encouragement*.

Whether he then meant to restore the kingdom of Israel to it's ancient glory?

7. 8. Jesus told them, it was not for them to inquire into the times, and seasons of things, which the Father reserved in his own power. They had concern only with what related to themselves; and the great errand, on which they were sent. They should propagate the gospel, and confirm the truth of it, both among the Jews, and Gentiles; and should be endowed with sufficient power to this purpose, through the influence of the Holy Ghost.

9. This was one of the last discourses, which Jesus held with his disciples. Soon afterwards he was taken from them; and in their sight ascended into heaven.

10. As they stood eagerly gazing after him; it pleased God to quiet their anxiety; by sending two angels to them; who appearing in a luminous form, said, You disciples of Jesus, why stand you here, expecting his return? He will return; but not till that time, when he shall come to judge the world.

12. 13. 14. These things were done on the mount of Olives, from whence the apostles returning to Jerusalem, assembled, in acts of devotion, with the mother of Jesus; and others of his followers.

15. At one of these meetings, when about one hundred and twenty disciples were present, Peter standing up, made the following proposal.

16. 17. 18. How dreadfully, said, he, Judas hath applied to himself that passage in the psalms, in *making his habitation desolate*, both by his unnatural treason, and his violent death; you all know. Let
19. 20. it be our business then to fulfil a second passage in the psalms; and

18. *Purchased a field*—that is, *was the cause of purchasing*. This is a common mode of speaking.

as he hath *made his habitation desolate*, let us provide, that, *another may take his office*. From those therefore, who have accompanied the Lord Jesus, through the whole of his ministry—from his baptism till his resurrection, let us ordain one to be a witness, together with us, of that great event. 21. 22.

This proposal being agreeable to the whole assembly, they resolved according to the ancient Jewish custom on solemn occasions, to leave the matter to the appointment of the Almighty, by a decision of lots. They proposed therefore two persons, Joseph, called Justus, and Matthias; and praying to God, as the searcher of hearts, to direct their choice, they gave out the lots. Matthias, being the chosen person, immediately joined the eleven apostles. 23. 24. 25. 26.

The time now approached, when the great promise of the Holy Ghost was to be fulfilled. The circumstances of that wonderful event were these. C H A P. II. 1.

As the whole body of the disciples were assembled at the celebration of the feast of pentecost; they were at first astonished with a sound, like a rushing wind, which filled the house, in which they 2. 3.

23. See Levit. xvi. 8—Numbers xxvi. 55—Josh. xiii. 6—Judg. xx. 9—1 Chron. xxiv. 5—Prov. xvi. 33.

25. The words, *that he might go to his own place*, have occasioned some difficulty. Many interpreters refer them to Judas, who was *to go to the punishment he deserved*. I rather, with other interpreters, refer them to the new-elected apostle; who *was to take the place assigned him*.

1. As it was provided by the providence of God, that Christ should suffer, and rise again, at the time of the passover, when the greatest number of people were assembled; so likewise, for the same reason most probably, the Holy Ghost was given at the time of the pentecost; and no doubt, the numbers of strangers who saw that great miracle, prepared the way, on their return home, for the better reception of the gospel in their several countries.—They who received the Holy Ghost, seem not only to have been the apostles; but at least the hundred and twenty disciples besides, who are mentioned Acts i. 15.

3. Διαμερισμεναι does not properly signify *cloven*, as we translate it; but *distributed* i. e. among them. This sense however, which appears to be a corrupt one, gave the idea probably of the mitre, with which the ancient bishop was adorned.

fat.

3. fat. This was succeeded by a luminous appearance, like fire; which in the form of tongues, rested on the head of each person present.
4. The effect immediately followed. They were all inspired with the Holy Ghost; and found themselves endowed with a miraculous power of speaking languages.

5. 6. 7. 8. 9.
10. 11. 12.

There were, at this time, at Jerusalem, on the occasion of the feast, a numerous body of Jews, and proselytes, from several parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia; who being informed of this great event, had conversation with the disciples; and were astonished to hear them discourse with every man, in his own language, on the great truths of the gospel.

13. Opposition however soon arose against the apostles; and such of the Jews particularly, as were prejudiced against the gospel, gave out, that these languages, which the disciples of Jesus were said to speak, were only the effect of drunkenness.

14. 15. On this Peter entered largely into the affair. He first shewed the absurdity of any such supposition, were it only because it was at that time, the hour of morning-sacrifice; and it could not be supposed, they would perform divine worship in an act of *drunkenness*; when every serious Jew thought himself bound in conscience to perform it *fasting*.—He then called to their remembrance, the prophecy of Joel; who very distinctly points out the effusion of God's Spirit in the days of the Messiah, on people of all conditions; reminding them, at the same time, of the threatenings,
16. 17. 18.
19. 20.

5. *Dwelling at Jerusalem*, means only sojourning there at that time. See the sense of the original word given by Grotius. Acts ii. 5.

11. Here is no mention made of the Greek language; from whence some have supposed the Greek was not among the inspired languages; as indeed it was then almost every where vernacular. But I suppose every language was inspired, if unknown, and wanted in the propagation of religion.

16. See Joel ii. 28, &c.

which

which are held out, in that remarkable prophecy—the misery, which is denounced—and the destruction, which is to follow on the whole Jewish nation.—Lastly, he dwelt on the means of salvation, which the prophet promises in the following words; *Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*—Consider, said he, to whom the prophet alludes in this passage. That holy person, Jesus of Nazareth, who wrought so many miracles among you; and whom, tho it was his own gracious act to die for mankind, you cruelly, and unjustly put to death, hath God now raised from the dead; according to another prophecy, that of David, who represents the Messiah triumphing over the grave: *Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: my flesh also shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption.*—The holy prophet, continued the apostle, could not speak this of himself; for he is both dead, and buried; and his sepulchre is with us to this day. But knowing, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that God intended the Messiah should spring from his seed; he undoubtedly in the spirit of prophecy, speaks of that great event, the resurrection of Jesus, of which we are witnesses.—After his resurrection, he was received into glory; and hath now fulfilled his promise, by sending this miraculous gift upon his followers; the effect of which you now see, and hear.—His ascension also is as much the subject of prophecy, as his resurrection. When David says, *The Lord said unto my Lord; Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;* he cannot possibly be supposed to apply the words to himself: but to the

21.

22. 23. 24.

25. 26. 27.
28.

29.

30.
31. 32.

33.

34. 35.

22. *A man approved of God.* The original rather signifies, *a man pointed out to you by God,* through the means of miracles, &c.

25. Psalm xvi. 9.

34. Ps. cx. 1.

36. exalted power of the Messiah.—Let the house of Israel then, at length be assured, added the apostle, in conclusion, that that Jesus, whom they crucified, is the undoubted Messiah, the redeemer, and ruler of the world.

37. Words never produced more effect on a multitude, than this speech of Peter. His audience, many of whom had probably either been concerned in the death of Jesus, or consenting to it; were confounded by his reasoning; and eagerly besought him, and the rest of the apostles, to instruct them how to avoid those heavy judgments denounced by the prophet.

38. Peter earnestly exhorted them to be baptized in the faith of Christ; and by amending their lives, to make themselves fit objects for the remission of their sins, and the reception of the Holy Spirit; which, with the other promises of the gospel, were offered to them; and to all the faithful people of God, wherever dispersed.

40. To this he added other exhortations; frequently reminding them of the judgments, which should speedily overthrow the Jewish nation; and which he warned them to endeavour with sincere repentance to avoid.

41. 42. 43. At the conclusion of these exhortations, not fewer than three
44. 45. 46. thousand were baptized, and embraced the faith of Christ. The
47. generality

39. *To all that were afar off.* By this expression the *apostle* probably had reference only to the dispersed Israelites; but the *Holy Spirit* might have reference to the Gentiles. See Ephes. ii. 13.

41. It is probable, the other apostles also might assist in making the same exhortations to other bodies of strangers, and that they all contributed to this wonderful, and sudden conversion.

42. *Breaking of bread* here, is not generally considered by interpreters in this sense. But, I think, from it's being placed between the *apostle's doctrine*, and *prayer*, it cannot well have the acceptation of a common meal; tho, I think, common meals seem to be understood by the same expression in v. 46.

45. Many interpreters do not suppose, they had a community in all things; but I think from the case of Ananias, that it is very plain they had; tho it as plainly appears, from
what

generality of the people indeed were only astonished at what they had seen; but the true believers continued with great sincerity in their profession—joining with the apostles in prayer, and the celebration of the Lord's supper—praising, and thanking God for his mercies—selling their possessions, that all might have a community in worldly things—and uniting with each other in every instance of love, and kindness.

This generous behaviour drew upon the infant-church the respect and reverence of all observers: and numbers daily joined themselves to their communion.

C H A P.
III.

1. 2.
3.

The peace and happiness, which the church enjoyed, endured not long. It was first disturbed on the following occasion.

4. 5.
6.

As Peter, and John were going to prayer in the temple; a lame man, who had been a cripple from his youth and was laid at what was called the *Beautiful-gate*, every day, by his friends, begged for alms. As he expected, from the attention, with which the apostles beheld him, to receive some present relief, Peter told him, that as for the riches of this world, he had none to give; but that what was in his power, he should confer on him. He then bad him, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise

what St. Peter said on that occasion, that this communication, was a *voluntary* one: and from many passages of scripture, we may gather, that it was meant only to be a temporary one. In the gospels, and epistles, there is always a distinction supposed between poor, and rich; nor could the affairs of the world possibly be carried on without it. At this early time indeed when all charity ceased towards Christians, but among themselves, a *communication* of property seems to have been necessary.

47. *Such as should be saved* says the text: but not such as should be saved by the *determined will of God*; but such as (v. 40. 42) *saved themselves from that untorward generation*, by continuing in the apostles doctrine.—Besides τῶν σωζομένων cannot with any propriety be rendered, such as *should be saved*; but *such as were saved*: that is, such as were placed by baptism, faith, and repentance, in a state of salvation; but this state they must of course maintain afterwards by a holy life.

T t

and

7. 8. and walk. On this the man immediately received perfect strength, and went with them into the temple to praise God for his mercy.

9. 10. 11. This great miracle occasioned a vast concourse of people in Solomon's porch; where Peter, and John, and the man, as they came out of the temple, were presently surrounded.

12. 13. 14. Peter thinking this a proper occasion to instruct the multitude,
15. 16. thus spoke.

Men of Israel, said he, be not surpris'd at what you have just seen; nor consider us as more than the instruments of this great miracle. That Jesus, whom you denied before Pilate, and by wicked suggestions put to death, hath God rais'd from the dead. We are the witnesses of his resurrection; and alledge this great miracle done in his name, and through faith in him, as a proof of that wonderful event.—And yet I will not suppose, that the murderers of the holy Jesus, knew whom they put to death. Be
17. that as it may, the prophecies, which foretold the Messiah's death,
18. were thus compleated.—Fully convinced then, from this miracle,
19. 20. 21. of the completion of these prophecies, let me exhort you to faith, repentance, and holy lives. Let me exhort you also to the recollection of another great event coming forward—the general doom, and judgment of mankind, by that same Jesus, whose gospel is now preached.
22. 23. Hear what your great lawgiver, Moses himself, says on this head; *a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren,*

16. It may be supposed, that as the impotent man had lain long at the gate of the temple, he had had frequent opportunities of hearing of the miracles of Jesus.

This verse is a striking example of the inaccuracies, which improper pointing sometimes introduces into the sacred text. If the middle part of the verse were pointed properly, the sense, which is now embarrassed, would be easy. ΤΟΥΤΟΝ ΟΥ ΘΕΛΕΡΙΠΤΕ, ΚΥ ΟΙΔΑΤΕ, ΕΩΣΤΕΡΩΣΕΙ. Τα ονομα, &c. Θεος, in the former verse, is nominative case to εωστερωσε.

22. Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

like

like unto me: him shall you bear; and every soul that will not bear that prophet, shall be cut off from the people.—Nor did Moses alone predict these things; but all the succeeding prophets unite in declaring, that to you first, as the children of the covenant hath God published salvation through Jesus Christ, if you are convinced by his resurrection, and will lead holy lives.

24.

25. 26.

CHAP.

IV.

1. 2. 3.

While Peter was thus speaking to the people, the priests, and Sadducees, and officers of the temple, came upon him, and seized both him and John; and threw them into prison; being greatly disturbed at finding the doctrine of the resurrection preached; and at it's acquiring even additional strength by the event of the resurrection of Jesus.

This violence however did not prevent the effects of the apostles exhortations; for the number of profelytes was now increased to about five thousand.

4.

The next day the chief priests, and elders called a council; and sending for the apostles, bad them give a plain account of their transaction with the lame man, which had occasioned so much disturbance.

5. 6. 7.

With the dignity of an inspired apostle, Peter told them, that to this enquiry a ready answer might be given. Through the name of Jesus Christ, said he, whom you crucified, and whom God raised from the dead, hath this great miracle been performed. He is that stone, which was set at naught by you builders; and which is notwithstanding, the head of the corner—the only origin, and source of salvation to mankind.

8. 9.

10.

11.

12.

4. It does not appear that five thousand *new* profelytes were added; but that what were now added, made the number five thousand. Erasmus is of this opinion. Jam enim numerus credentium accreverat usque ad quinque virorum millia.

13. The Jewish priests being well informed, that the two apostles had been the companions of Jesus; and knowing them to be obscure, illiterate men, were astonished at the dignity, and spirit with which Peter spoke. At the same time, seeing the man, who had been healed, standing before them, they were unable to deny the fact.

15. 16. 17. Commanding the apostles therefore to go aside, they consulted
18. what was best to be done; and at length resolved to forbid them to preach any longer in the name of Jesus.

19. But Peter and John, with great firmness, bad them consider,
20. whether it were right to listen to God, or them? and gave them to understand, that they certainly should continue to give their testimony to the great truths, which had been intrusted to them.

21. 22. The chief priests however, satisfied with threatening the apostles a second time, set them at liberty; being afraid of the people, on whom the restoration of a man, who had been forty years lame, had had a wonderful effect.

23. 24. 25. The apostles being dismissed, retired to their company; and
26. 27. 28. reported what had happened. In consequence of this deliverance
29. 30. the church united in a thanksgiving to God.

They praised him for all his wonderful works—and particularly for the completion of his holy promises in the ineffectual efforts of all the enemies of religion—and concluded with begging God's assistance in giving them courage, and ability to preach his word; and power to confirm the truth of it by miracles.

13. It is no wonder they were surprized; for more convincing pieces of composition than Peter's speeches, are not easily to be found.

19. We have a noble expression of the same kind, which Plato puts in the mouth of Socrates: He tells his judges, that he was determined to avouch his doctrine; and that for this reason; *πεισσομαι τω Θιω, μαλλον η εμιν.*

When

When their prayer was concluded, the place, where they had assembled, was shaken as before, by a strong wind; and the Holy Ghost fell on all who were present, inspiring them with new powers to continue the great work, in which they were engaged. 31.

In the mean time, while the apostles bore testimony to the truth of the gospel, particularly to the resurrection of Christ; love, and kindness, in the highest degree, were exercised among all, who embraced the faith. No man claimed a property in any thing, he possessed. So that, of course, neither superfluity, nor want, existed among them. The common stock was put into the hands of the apostles, who distributed it according to their discretion.—Of those, who thus converted their estates into public property, the most considerable was Joses of Cyprus, a Levite, who sold some lands, which he possessed in that island; and brought the produce to the apostles. This holy person obtained afterwards the surname of Barnabas. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37.

Among other professors of christianity, there was a certain person of the name of Ananias, who with his wife Sapphira, wished to gain the credit of this disinterested behaviour, without subjecting themselves to the worldly inconveniences of it. Ananias therefore sold his lands; and out of the produce, brought a *certain part* to the apostles, as if it had been the *whole*. But instead of meeting the

CHAP.
V.
1. 2.

3.

31. It is left undetermined by St. Luke, what number of new profelytes were assembled on this occasion, and received the Holy Ghost. It seems most probable, that the whole five thousand were present. The only difficulty is, how so great a number should be accommodated in one place.

35. The sacrifices of the temple, of which the common people partook, were a great relief to the Jewish poor. As the christian converts were deprived of this, some other relief was the more necessary. Hence community of property seems to have arisen.

approbation

4. approbation he expected, Peter gave him a severe rebuke, for attempting to deceive the Spirit of God. Before the land was sold, said he, was it not your own? And afterwards, was not the price your own likewise? Who demanded it of you? You have not endeavoured to deceive man only; but the Holy Spirit of God.

5. On hearing this, Ananias fell down instantly dead; which threw a religious fear on all, who were present.

6. 7. About three hours after he had been carried out to his burial,
8. his wife knowing nothing of the matter, came in: and Peter asking her, Whether the price, that had been brought, was the full value
9. of the land? She affirmed, it was. Then Peter spoke to her in the same severe language, in which he had spoken to her husband; and taxed her with the great sin of endeavouring to deceive the
10. Holy Spirit of God. On this she too fell down dead; and was carried out, and buried near her husband.

11. 12. 13. The exemplary punishment, which God thought proper to inflict
14. on this occasion, added great weight and reverence to the apostolic character; no man daring from henceforward, to unite himself with the apostles *on any worldly motives*. Multitudes however of true believers were daily added to the church; through the efficacy of the miracles, which were daily wrought in the most public

10. Some exemplary punishment seemed necessary to prevent people's joining the apostles on false pretences; and discrediting the Christian religion in its infancy by worldly motives. This effect, as we are told (ver. 13) immediately followed.—But this offers no argument in favour of persecution. Who inflicted the punishment? was it man, or God?

11. There is some confusion in the order of the verses here; which may be restored in the following manner, which Bowyer tells us, he had from the mouth of Bp. Sherlock.

11. *And great fear came upon all the church, and as many as heard these things.* 14 *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.* 12 *And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.* 13 *And of the rest durst no one join himself to them: but the people magnified them.* 12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs, and wonders wrought;* 15 *insomuch, that they brought, &c."* See Bowyer's conjectures.

manner

manner—often in the streets; where the sick were brought in
couches; and found it sufficient to receive the shadow of Peter, as
he passed by. From several parts of the country also, around Jeru-
salem, sick people were brought to the apostles; and immediately
found a cure.

15.
16.

The chief priests, and Sadducees, of which sect were most of the
Jewish doctors, being exceedingly provoked at these proceedings,
seized the apostles again, and threw them into prison. But it
pleased God to deliver them in the night, by an angel; under whose
direction in the morning they went, as usual, into the temple, and
preached.

17.
18.
19.
20.

The chief priests, in the mean time, called a council; and sent
to the prison for the apostles. The officers returned with an ac-
count, that they had found the prison shut, and guarded; but that
the prisoners were gone.

21.
22. 23.
,

While the council were perplexed at this unaccountable event;
they received information, that the men, whom they had imprisoned
the day before, were, at that very time, preaching in the temple.
On this they sent a guard, and brought them without violence (for
they feared the people) and questioned them for their insolence in
preaching a religion, which the council had forbidden them to
propagate any farther. You have filled Jerusalem, said they, with
your doctrines; and seem desirous of bringing this man's blood
upon us.

24.
25.
26. 27. 28.

The apostles answered with that firmness, which they had shewn
before, that it was their duty to obey God, rather than man. The
same Jesus, said they, whom you crucified, hath God raised from
the dead, and exalted to be the Saviour of mankind, through the
conditions of faith, and repentance. We are the witnesses of
his resurrection; as is also the Holy Ghost; the effects of whose
gracious operations you have seen so wonderfully displayed.

29.
30. 31.

32.

This

33. This bold language irritated the council so much, that some of the warmest of them seemed to think they ought immediately to proceed capitally against the apostles.

34. There sat at that time, in the council, an eminent doctor, named
35. Gamaliel; who removing the apostles, warned the council to be
36. cautious what they did in this matter. We have heard of many people, said he, who have professed themselves the deliverers of Israel; and whose attempts have come to nothing. Such was Theudas, who got together about four hundred men; but perished
37. in his enterprize, together with his company. After him appeared Judas of Galilee, who drew together a great body of people: but he too lost his life, and all his followers were dispersed. Be
38. advised therefore, and let these people alone. If their designs depend only on human means, like other designs of the same kind, they
39. will come to nothing. But if they are of God, you yourselves may be crushed by opposing, what it will not be in your power to prevent.

40. This prudent advice had great weight with the assembly. They called in the apostles therefore, and ordering them to be scourged, dismissed them with strict injunctions to preach no more in the
41. name of Jesus. They however, regardless of any menaces, and counting it matter of joy, that they were thought worthy of suffering
42. for their religion, continued both publicly, and privately to preach the gospel.

C H A P.

VI.

1.

Soon after this, some uneasiness arose in the christian church (now become considerable) from another cause.

36. Josephus mentions a person of the name of Theudas, who made an insurrection; but it was ten years after this time. Dr. Lardner (Cred. VI. p. 403) supposes two insurgents of that name. Archbp. Usher supposes it a mistake for another Judas, who made an insurrection, according to Josephus, a little after the death of Herod the great.

1. These Jews commonly spoke the Greek language, and were therefore called Ελληνισταί: the native Greeks were called Ελληνες. But some are of opinion that the Ελληνισταί were heathen converts to Judaism.

Among

Among the christian profelytes were many foreign Jews, who complained, that their poor did not receive an equal proportion from the common stock, with such Jews, as were natives of Judea.

The apostles, inquiring into this matter, called a general assembly of the church; and urging their own necessary avocations, in the ministry of the gospel, as not allowing them to attend to the distribution of alms; desired them to chuse, from the whole body of christians, seven men of eminent sanctity, and wisdom, whom they might appoint over this business. 2. 3. 4.

The proposal pleased the whole assembly; and they chose Stephen, a man of great piety, and christian zeal; Philip; Procorus; Nicanor; Timon; Parmenas; and Nicolas, a profelyte of Antioch. These seven were brought to the apostles; who approved the choice; and, after solemn prayer, confirmed them in their office. 5. 6.

In the mean time, the gospel continued to make a great progress; and began now to gain ground among the higher ranks of people; many even of the priests having embraced it. 7.

Among the several professors of it, no man, except the apostles, contributed so much to extend it's influence as Stephen; who did not confine himself merely to the station, which had been assigned him; but with wonderful force of argument, as well as by miracles, displayed the power of the gospel. 8.

3. This verse is much used in the argument about church government; tho it seems to carry no authority in the question. The designation of these seven men was undoubtedly an apostolic act: but they seem to have been designed only to the office of almoners. It is remarkable however, (whether it happened by chance, or was intended) that in eight or nine editions of our English bible (between the years 1650 and 1680) the word, *καταστήσωμεν* we appoint, is translated *ye appoint*.

5. From the names it seems probable, that some of these were *ελληνισταί*; which shews it to have been an election of great judgment. The last was certainly a foreigner.

9. There were at that time in Jerusalem, a body of foreign Jews, both Africans, and Asiatics, who had a synagogue appropriated to themselves, called the Synagogue of freedom. These men frequently engaged in dispute with Stephen on the mosaic dispensation: but not being able to oppose him by argument, they commenced a regular prosecution against him; and stirring up many of the Scribes and Pharisees, and a large body of people, they brought him before the Sanhedrim; and accused him, by witnesses, whom they had suborned, of having spoken contemptuously both of the *temple, and the Jewish law*; and of asserting that *Jesus of Nazareth was come to destroy both*.—The countenance of Stephen, while he stood before the council, and heard so much malicious testimony against him, was full of that divine, and heavenly composure, which drew the attention of the whole assembly.

CHAP.
VII.
1.

After the witnesses had been heard, the high-priest asked him, What he had to say in his defence?

- Stephen in a long apology, laboured to convince his hearers, that God was no *respector of places*—that their fathers had worshipped in various countries; and that even the temple itself was built late in the history of the Jews—He traced the divine dispensations

9. It is probable that all the foreign Jews had synagogues appropriated to themselves; some of which synagogues, as many Jews were freemen of Rome, might derive their title from thence. See Lardner's *Credib.* part I. ch. iii. Professor Gerdes supposes they took their name from Libertina, a city of Africa; which Lardner seems to think a probable supposition.

2. As Stephen, was accused of conspiring to destroy the *Jewish temple, and the law*, it seems to be the most *obvious* intention of his thus recapitulating the history of the patriarchs, to shew, that the temple establishment had not always existed; and that there was no necessity to suppose it always should exist; as the Jews especially had rendered themselves so unworthy of this divine dispensation by persecuting the prophets, and putting their Saviour to death.

Some interpreters give a different view of Stephen's argument. *They* say, the drift of it was to caution the Jews against rejecting Christ, as they had rejected Moses, and the prophets. This, no doubt, makes a part of his argument; but it does not seem the *purport* of it.

Others

penfations from the time of Abraham. That great patriarch, faid he, firft worfhipped God in Mefopotamia. From thence he was
 3. 4.
 fent to Haram; and afterwards into the land which you now inhabit. But he had no poffeffion in it; refting merely on a promife, that his family, after fuffering the miferies of bondage, fhould
 5. 6. 7.
 worfhip God there, as they had done in other places. But the
 8.
 covenant of circumcifion was given long before; and that rite was obferved by Abraham in his pilgrimage, juft as it is obferved by you at Jerufalem.—The next migration of our fathers, was
 9. 10. 11.
 into Egypt. Here Jofeph, under the immediate influence of God, 12. 13. 14.
 faved the land of Egypt, and all his father's houfe from the effects 15. 16.
 of a famine; and here Jacob, at his fon's request, brought his family to fojourn. Here thofe holy patriarchs worfhipped the God of their fathers; and here they finifhed their earthly courfe.
 —The evils of their pofterity increafing, as the people multiplied; 17. 18. 19.
 Mofes, who had been educated by Pharoah's daughter in the learning of Egypt; and had been obliged to fly the country for

Others again fuppofe, that Stephen's great intention was to exhibit Jofeph, and Mofes as types of Chrift; who were both rejected by their brethren, as Chrift alfo was; and correſponded with him in many inſtances of their lives.—This too he certainly has in view; but this does not make the drift of his argument.

From theſe different opinions, it is plain however, that the apology of Stephen is a difficult paſſage of ſcripture; and that it is hard to make out what the chief intention of it was. For myſelf, I am moſt inclined to the interpretation I have given; and have therefore abridged the detail of the hiſtory of the Jews, that Stephen's argument might appear with more force. At the ſame time, I think it very probable, that he might *intend covertly* to ſhew the Jews, that by rejecting Chrift, and his apoſtles, they were purſuing the very ſteps of their forefathers, who had rejected the prophets.

There are other difficulties, tho I think of little importance, in this apology of Stephen. They regard chiefly the dates and numbers mentioned in the 4th, 6th, and 14th verſes; and the burial of the patriarchs in the 16th.

7. *Will I judge.* Bp. Pearce obſerves, that the law *tries, ſentences, and executes*; and that the word *κρίμα* relates ſometimes to one, and ſometimes to another, of theſe operations.

20. 21. 22. an ineffectual endeavour to assist his countrymen; was afterwards
 23. 24. 25. called by God to lead them out of bondage by a high hand.—
 26. 27. 28. But even Moses himself, the founder of the Jewish government,
 29. 30. 31. who received the law from God, through the mediation of an
 32. 33. 34. angel, is so far from supposing his institution to be of perpetual
 35. 36. 37. obligation, that he mentions the Messiah, under the title of a
 38. great prophet, who was to arise after him.—Consider also how
 39. 40. 41. unworthy this sinful nation hath made itself of a perpetual esta-
 42. 43. blishment. From the times of Aaron, and the golden calf, re-
 44. collect it's constant succession of idolatries, and rebellions. It
 45. is true, our fathers had the ark under a tabernacle in the wilder-
 ness, built after the fashion, which God had appointed—it is
 true also, that they carried it with them into the land of promise;
 and carefully maintained it, till the days of David; and afterwards
 till the days of Solomon; who was permitted to build that temple,
 which his father only designed.—All this is true; but it is
 as true, that God hath all along declared by his prophets, that
 he will not be considered, as dwelling in the narrow limits of
 a temple made with hands; but as filling the universe, which he

20. *And was exceeding fair*: Ἀσείος τῷ Θεῷ. This mode of expression is agreeable to the Hebrew idiom. Great cedars are called, *cedars of God*. Pf. lxxx. 10, and great mountains, *mountains of God*. Pf. xxxvi. 6.—Josephus tells us, that nobody could look at Moses, without being struck with his beauty.

22. Moses is said to be mighty in *deeds*, as well as *words*; which some have imagined to allude to a story told by Josephus, that upon an invasion of Egypt by the Ethiopians, Moses was appointed general of the Egyptian forces, and drove the invaders back, with great slaughter. Antiq. lib. II. 10.

30. The burning bush, which was not consumed, is thought by many to have been a very apposite sign to Moses. The people whom he was to relieve, were indeed greatly oppressed: but it was as easy for God to deliver them from that oppression, as it was for him to prevent the bush from being consumed by the fire, that was in the midst of it. The one was a sign of the other.

43. The phrase, *taking up the tabernacle of Moluc*, relates to the practice of carrying about the image of the God Moluc, on solemn occasions in a shrine.

hath

hath created—as making heaven his throne, and earth his footstool.—Stephen concluded his apology by telling the council; 51. 52. 53. that he foresaw they would resist the Holy Spirit of God; and oppose the truth, as their fathers had done before them. The only difference was, that their fathers had persecuted those, who prophesied of the Messiah: while they had persecuted the Messiah himself: and that, in short, they were the persons, not he, who *had set at naught both Moses and his law.*

This severe charge threw the council into the utmost rage.— 54. Stephen, seeing to what lengths their malice would arise, told 55. 56. 57. them, he was prepared for the utmost effects of it—that he saw heaven opened—and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

On this they cried out with loud voices—stopped their ears, as if such blasphemy was not fit to be heard; and rushing upon 58. 59. 60. him with one accord, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him. He, in the mean time, thoroughly impressed with the spirit of the religion he had embraced, prayed for his murderers, and recommended his soul into the hands of his Saviour.—They, who stoned him, gave their garments in charge to a young man of the name of Saul; who stood by as an assenting spectator of the death of Stephen.—After the Jews had thus sated their vengeance, Stephen's friends were suffered to carry his dead body to burial; which they performed with great lamentations.

CHAP.
VIII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

58. This seems not to have been a *judicial*, but a *tumultuary* action; what the Jews called the *judgment of zeal*. They could not put a criminal to death, without the cognizance of the Roman governor. Beaufobre is the only commentator, I recollect, who is of a different opinion: but his reasons, do not appear convincing.—Some however are of opinion, that the *judgment of zeal* was permitted by the Romans: but this, I think, is very doubtful.

59. The dying words of Stephen contain so plain an act of worship to Christ, that it seems difficult to evade them. They are not so strong indeed in our translation, as in the original, where the word *God* is not found.

The death of this holy man was the beginning of a violent persecution against the church at Jerusalem; which separated in different ways to avoid it. None of any eminence continued in the city, except the apostles.

Among such as took the most active part in this persecution, was Saul, who was very zealous in executing the orders of the Sanhedrim.

These efforts however to destroy Christianity, tended only to propagate it the more, by the preaching of those, who fled into other countries.

5. 6. 7. Among the most eminent of these preachers, was Philip, one of the seven deacons, who had been ordained by the apostles. This holy man went to Samaria; and preached the gospel there with such power, and confirmed the truth of it with so many miracles; that the people universally attended to him; and the whole city was filled with religious joy.

9. 10. 11. There dwelt in Samaria, at that time, one Simon, a magician; who had deceived the people by his pretences to miraculous powers; making them believe, he was something more than human. However, this person himself seemed so convinced by the preaching, and miracles of Philip, that he was baptized, as others had been; and professed himself a disciple.

14. 15. 16. 17. Some time after, the apostles, at Jerusalem, hearing of the success of the gospel in Samaria, sent Peter, and John to give weight to the ministry there; and through the prayers of these apostles, all the new proselytes, who had yet only been baptized in the name of Jesus, received the Holy Ghost.

5. The old town of Samaria was at this time destroyed; so that Philip must have gone to some town in the *district of Samaria*.

When Simon saw, that the apostles, by laying on their hands, conferred the Holy Ghost, and the power of working miracles; he made them an offer of a sum of money to grant him that privilege. 18. 19.

But Peter, with great indignation, rebuked him, for supposing, that the gift of God could be purchased by money. He told him, that he was yet totally unacquainted with the spirit of the gospel; and bad him repent of his sins, and pray to God to forgive the wickedness of his heart. 20. 21.

Simon seemed greatly affected with the severity of this rebuke; and begged the apostles to join in prayer with him, that God would avert the evils, which they had threatened. 22. 23. 24.

Soon after, the two apostles returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in such of the Samaritan cities, as they passed through. 25.

Philip, in the mean time, was sent on a different errand. He was ordered by the direction of an angel, to go to the road, which leads from Jerusalem to Gaza, as it enters the desert. There a person of great authority, in the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, was returning home from Jerusalem, where he had been worshipping (as all serious profelytes were accustomed to do at the great feasts) and Philip was ordered by the Spirit to join him. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30.

25. It rather seems, that the account of these two apostles coming from Jerusalem is introduced here for the sake of the relation of Simon Magus; about whom there might have been probably, at that time, some misrepresentations, which it was thought necessary to obviate.

26. Arrian, in his history of Alexander, mentions Gaza as the last town, that was inhabited, before you enter the desert between Phenicia and Egypt.

27. As the word *Εὐερχος* has an ambiguous sense, signifying also sometimes a chamberlain, I leave it undetermined.

29. Pliny speaking of an Island, appendent on Ethiopia, under the name of Meroe, tells us, that Candace reigned there, quod nomen multis jam annis, ad reginas transit.

Hist. Nat. Lib. VI.

He

He found the Ethiopian reading the prophecy of Isaiah, and asked him, if he understood what he read? The other answered, he did not; and conceiving Philip to be a person of information, desired him to come up to him into his chariot, and explain it. The passage he read, was in the fifty-third chapter: *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so he opened not his mouth: in his humiliation, his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.* Now of whom, said the Ethiopian, doth the prophet speak—of himself, or of some other person?

Philip, beginning at this passage, opened to him the dispensation of the gospel; and by his discourse produced such an effect on the Ethiopian, that when they came to a pool of water, he desired, he might immediately be admitted to baptism. Philip asked him, if he believed sincerely in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Ethiopian professing his faith, was accordingly baptized. After the ceremony, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip to Azotas; where he preached the gospel; and from thence in all the other towns in his way to Cæsarea. In the mean time the Ethiopian returned home full of religious joy.

C H A P.
IX.

1. 2.

During these transactions, Saul, who was one of the most zealous persecutors of the church, having heard that many Christians had fled

33. *A person's judgment being taken away*, was a sort of proverb for *being oppressed*. See Job xxvii. 2.

40. The miraculous mission of Philip to Gaza, to meet the Ethiopian, was, no doubt, an intervention of Providence to prepare the way for the gospel in Ethiopia; where, as Eusebius informs us, this treasurer of queen Candace first planted it. The manner, in which Philip was conveyed away from the Ethiopian, seems to have been intended as a miracle, to convince him of the truth of the religion, he had just embraced.

2. Damascus in Syria stands upon a plain so extensive (as Maundrel informs us) that the mountains which surround some parts of it, are only just discernable. The river Barrady which

fled to Damascus, desired letters from the high-priest to the synagogue there, ordering them to deliver to him all the Jews of that persuasion; that he might bring them to be punished at Jerusalem.

Having received a commission, he set out on his journey. 3.
 But as he approached Damascus, a sudden light from heaven shone round him; and as he fell to the ground, he heard a voice saying, 4.
 Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? He had recollection enough 5.
 to ask, Who it was, that spoke? The voice answered, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. Why opposeth thou thus the will of God? Saul overwhelmed with amazement, and struck 6.
 at once with horror at his late conduct, asked trembling, What he should do? and was ordered to go to Damascus; and it should there be told him.

In the mean time, the men, who travelled with him stood speechless; hearing a voice, but not understanding the import 7.
 of it.

As for Saul, as soon as he had raised himself from the ground, 8.
 he found he was deprived of his sight; and was obliged to be

which issues from the mountain of Antilibanus, runs through the plain; and arriving at Damascus, divides into three streams: the intermediate one passes through the town; and the other two, on each side, circle it's suburbs. The city, as you approach it, makes a grand appearance; it's mosques, steeples, and minarets being very stately.

5. Lord Barrington (miscel. fac. eff. 3) ingeniously supposes, that Paul being a learned Jew, knew this light to be the Shechinah; and that it imported the divine presence. He therefore with confidence asked, *Who art thou Lord?* — *It is hard for thee, to kick against the pricks*, was a proverbial expression, signifying impotent rage, that hurts only ourselves.

7. When St. Paul gives an account of this vision at Jerusalem, (Acts xxii. 9) he says, the men *heard not the voice*; tho in this verse, he says *they did hear it*. The contradiction is very easily reconciled by supposing, they were so terrified, that they heard nothing articulate.

8. Saul's being deprived of sight, and restored to it again, expresses, as some suppose, the idea of that darkness, in which he had formerly lived; and of the light which now shone upon him.

9. led into Damascus; where he continued three days in a state of contrition, prayer, and fasting.

10. 11. 12. At the end of that time, a christian, of the name of Ananias, who lived at Damascus, was sent by a heavenly vision to restore him to fight. Ananias, knowing the character of Saul, could not help
13. 14. expressing his apprehensions of him. But he was given to under-
15. 16. 17. stand how great a conversion had been wrought in him; and to what eminence he should hereafter arise in the christian church, as the great apostle of the Gentiles. Ananias, thus instructed, went to Saul, and told him, that Jesus, who had spoken to him on the road, restored him to fight; and that he should receive the Holy Ghost.

His sight being accordingly restored, he was baptized; and
18. 19. recovered by degrees from that state of distress, into which he had been thrown. Then joining himself to the disciples, he began
20. to preach the gospel, to the great astonishment of all, who had
21. known his former life; and applying all his learning in the Jewish
22. law, to the support of christianity, he confounded the Jews, who dwelt at Damascus; and proved plainly, from their own scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah.

Some time after, the Jews laid in wait for him, and watched
23. 24. 25. at the gate of the city to seize, and destroy him. But Saul, being informed of their intention, escaped over the wall in a basket, and went to Jerusalem.

11. *Tarsus* was a town in Cilicia, famous both for it's trade, and for being a seat of learn- It is supposed to be the old Tarshish, mentioned so often in the old Testament.

20. Paul *preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God*: the precise meaning here is, that he affirmed and proved that *that Jesus, was the Messiah, who had been crucified at Jerusalem.*

Here also he was at first received with suspicion; till Barnabas carried him to the apostles, and related all the circumstances of his conversion, and faith; on which he continued to preach in concert with them.—Here too with great strength of argument, he disputed with the Grecian Jews; who attempting to seize him, the apostles thought it proper to send him to Tarsus.

26. 27. 28.

29.

30.

At this time, the churches, which were now multiplied, had peace; and rejoiced in the goodness of the Lord.

31.

Peter taking the opportunity of this quiet season, made a progress among them; and went first to Lydda.

32.

Here he found a person of the name of Eneas who had been eight years a paralytic, whom he healed in the name of Jesus Christ; and by this miracle converted many of the Jews, who dwelt at Lydda, and in the vale of Saron.

33. 34.

35.

Another miracle also, which he performed at that time, had a great effect in converting the Jews of those parts.

36. 37. 38.
39. 40. 41.
42.

A pious, and very charitable woman at Joppa, of the name of Tabitha, being dead, the disciples there sent two of their body to Peter at Lydda, to desire him to come to them. Peter immediately went; and was carried into an upper chamber; where he found the corpse laid out for burial; and a number of poor widows standing

26. This was the journey, which Paul mentions Gal. i. 18.

34. The word *στρωσον* does not properly signify *make thy bed*: but *make ready thy room for thy guests*. The same word is used in that sense, Mark xiv. 15, and Luke xxii. 12.—The case seems to be this. Peter was in Eneas's house, with other guests, as was not uncommon in the houses of sick people, when only *confined*; as in this paralytic case. To shew therefore the greatness of the cure, Peter bad Eneas arise, and himself make his room ready for his guests.

35. Lydda was a celebrated town in Judea, in which were many schools; and where the Sanhedrim sometimes met.—The vale of Saron, or Sharon, was remarkable for the many villages that were scattered about it, and for its rich pasturage. See 1 Chron. xxvii. 29.

36. Joppa was a sea-port, on the Mediterranean, not far from Lydda.

round it, lamenting their loss; and shewing their several garments, which the holy woman had given them.

Peter removing them from the chamber, that their lamentations might not interrupt his prayers, kneeled down, and prayed fervently to God. He then arose, and calling her by her name, her life returned; and she was presented by the apostle to her friends in perfect health.

43.

After this, Peter continued at Joppa some time longer; during which the divine Providence brought about one of the greatest events of the christian church.

C H A P.

X.

1. 2.

It happened, that some Roman troops were at this time stationed at Cæsarea. To this garrison belonged a centurion of the name of Cornelius; a man of eminent piety, and charity; which through his example, were diffused through his family. This person being favoured by an angelic vision, importing the acceptance of his good works in the sight of God; was ordered to send to Joppa for the apostle Peter, who should instruct him in a still purer faith, than he had yet received: in obedience to which vision Cornelius immediately sent proper persons on this errand.

3. 4. 5. 6.

7. 8.

9. 10.

In the mean time it pleased God, as this was the first instance of Gentile conversion, to allay the prejudices, which Peter might have on that subject, in the following manner.

11. 12.

The apostle having been at prayer, and being afterwards hungry, while food was preparing for him, fell into a trance, and saw a

2. The expression φοβούμενος τον θεον commonly signifies a person, who acknowledged, and worshipped the true God; but did not pay obedience to the law. He was called a profelyte of the gate by some: while others allow no such person; but suppose the Jews divided mankind merely into Jews, and Gentiles. See the question discussed in Dr. Lardner's evangel. writers, chap. xviii.

large sheet, held by the four corners, full of different kinds of animals, clean, and unclean, descending towards him. As he stood beholding it, a voice from heaven bad him take, and use what he chose, without distinction. Peter offended at the idea, said, He had never been accustomed to eat any thing unclean. The voice answered, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou unclean. This was repeated three several times.

13.

14.

15.

16.

While Peter was hesitating, and doubting in himself, what might be the meaning of this vision, he had a secret intimation from the Holy Spirit, that three persons, who then waited for him, should explain the intention of what he had seen; and was ordered to accompany them without objection.

17. 18. 19.

20.

Peter immediately going down, found the messengers from Cornelius; and asking the cause of their coming to him, was informed of the several circumstances of the vision, which Cornelius had seen. Peter kept them with him that night; and the next day set out with them to Cæsarea, attended by some of the brethren from Joppa.

21.

22.

23.

The next morning, they arrived at Cæsarea; where they found Cornelius, with a company of his friends, expecting them.

24.

When Peter's arrival was known, Cornelius went out to meet him, and fell down at his feet. But Peter raising him, gently rebuked him for giving that honour to a man, which was due only to God.

25.

26.

16. A thing's being done three times has generally been considered, both among sacred, and prophane authors, as a sign of earnestness, and certainty. Thus St. Paul says, *I besought the Lord thrice*; and thus Virgil,

—Terque ipsa solo, mirabile dictu.

Emicuit

25. Many interpreters suppose, that Cornelius took Peter for an angel: but his having been the subject of an angel's mission was certainly ground enough for Cornelius to consider him as a person of high dignity. The Romans never used prostration to any human being.

27. Peter then entering the house, and seeing so numerous a company
 28. assembled; made his apology as a Jew, for this familiar intercourse
 with Gentiles; saying that God had instructed him to make no
 29. distinction between them, and the Jews, He then inquired into
 the reason, why Cornelius had sent for him.

30. 31. 32. Cornelius related the particulars of his vision; which Peter com-
 33. 34. paring with what he himself had seen, said, He was now fully
 convinced, that God made no distinction, among the several nations
 35. of the world; but was ready to admit all religious people of every
 36. denomination, as well as the Jews, to the privileges of the gospel.
 He then set before them the great object of a christian's faith.—
 Jesus Christ, sent by God to be the Saviour of the world—
 37. who, after John the Baptist had prepared his way by preach-
 38. ing repentance had, under the influence of the Holy Spirit,
 39. 40. 41. wrought many miracles to establish the faith of mankind in his
 doctrine. Of these great events, and of his death, and glorious
 resurrection, Peter told them, he, and the rest of the apostles,
 were witnesses, chosen by God. They had been conversant with
 42. 43. Jesus, both before, and after his resurrection; and were appointed
 to publish to mankind, remission of sins, through faith and re-
 pentance—to inform the world, that Jesus will be the judge of

41. The expression, *not unto all the people, but unto chosen witnesses*, has given great offence to free-thinkers. Why not unto *all the people*? Why not make this event as public as possible?—God Almighty might have many reasons. One or two even human prudence may suggest. Suppose Christ had shewn himself formally to the chief priests, and they had attempted again, as they probably would, to seize him: he must by a miracle have escaped out of their hands. And might not this have given occasion to their saying, that the resurrection also was a mere *illusion*?—Suppose again, his enemies, who *had seen* him, should have denied it (as they appear to have been capable of anything) would not this have made their evidence, if appealed to, worse, than their giving no evidence at all?—Besides, all the people *might* have seen him, *if they had pleased*: all that is meant is, that the apostles only were the *appointed, chosen* witnesses. Five hundred, we know, at one time, did see him together. 1. Cor. xv. 6.

quick,

quick, and dead—and to open, and unfold all the prophecies, which bear testimony to the great truths concerning him.

While Peter was thus speaking, it pleased God, on this solemn occasion of the first Gentile conversion, to pour out on all, who were present, the gift of the Holy Ghost; with it's miraculous accompaniment of speaking languages. 44. 45. 46.

This exceedingly astonished the Jewish Christians, who came with Peter. That apostle however conceiving the gift of the Holy Ghost to be a sufficient evidence of the faith of these converts, ordered them immediately to be baptized.—After this, Peter continued, at the request of these new disciples, some days longer at Cæsarea. 47. 48.

C H A P.

XI.

1.

In the mean time, the account of what had happened at Cæsarea, being brought to Jerusalem, gave much offence to the Jewish Christians, who thought the privileges of the law had been invaded; insomuch, that when Peter returned to Jerusalem, he found the matter very ill-understood; and many of the disciples disposed to find fault with his behaviour. 2. 3.

On this he gave them a plain relation of the whole affair from the beginning—of the vision which *he* had seen—of the vision, which *Cornelius* had seen—of his visit to that pious centurion; and of the descent of the Holy Ghost. He then put them in mind of what Jesus himself had said, that *John indeed baptized with water; but that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost*; and concluded with saying, that as God had thought proper to give his sanction to the reality of the conversion; it would surely have been highly improper in him, to have been backward in receiving these converts by baptism into the communion of the church. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

17.

This relation of the affair had its full effect; and the whole assembly united in praising God for making the Gentiles partakers with them of the benefits of the gospel. 18.

While

19. 20. 21. While these things were doing at Cæsarea, the gospel began to extend in another quarter, as far as Antioch, and the country in it's neighbourhood. Here it was preached by some of the disciples, who had fled from Jerusalem, on the persecution, which had followed Stephen's death; and being accompanied by miracles, had great success. It was now preached both to Jews, and Gentiles.

22. The apostles at Jerusalem being informed of the disposition of Antioch to receive the gospel, immediately sent Barnabas thither;
 23. who found great cause for rejoicing; and exhorted the new con-
 24. verts to continue steadily in the faith they had professed. Barnabas was a man of a mild, and amiable disposition; and being aided by the gifts, and graces of the Holy Spirit, he won greatly upon
 25. the people; and brought a large addition to the church. But thinking there was still occasion for more assistance, he went to
 26. Tarsus for Saul; and returned with him to Antioch. Here these two apostles continued a full year; and formed a very considerable church; the members of which were first known by the name of Christians.

27. 28. About the end of the year, a disciple of the name of Agabus, coming with some other disciples from Jerusalem, declared at An-

19. Ελληνιστας in some copies is Ελληνας; and indeed there seems to be a distinction between the Grecians mentioned ver. 20, and the Jews mentioned ver. 19. See a note on Acts vi. 1.

26. The word *χρηματιζω* properly signifies obtaining a name from a calling; of which kind of names we have many in England, as *Smith, Miller, Carpenter, &c.* One would imagine the name of Christian was first given in contempt; both because the people of Antioch were said to be of a scurrilous, jesting humour; and because Tacitus, when he mentions Christians, expresses himself under this idea, *vulgus christianos appellat.*—The word apostle is not always strictly confined to the twelve. Barnabas is called an apostle. Acts xiv. 14.

28. Οικουμενη, in the original, is supposed by some to signify the Roman empire; but it is most commonly confined in this passage to Judea. Josephus speaks of a famine in Judea at this time, but mentions no other place; and indeed if it had raged in Syria, the Christians there, could not have been so well able to send relief to their brethren in Judea.

tiach, in the spirit of prophecy, that there should soon be a great famine through Judea, which accordingly came to pass. On this the church of Antioch made a collection for their brethren there; and sent it to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas, and Saul.

29.

CHAP.
XII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

While the affairs of the church were in this prosperous situation at Cæsarea, and Antioch, Herod Agrippa, with a view to please the Sanhedrim, began a severe persecution against the christians at Jerusalem. He first put James, the son of Zebedee, to death; and soon after apprehending Peter, threw him into prison; with a view to execute him also, after the ensuing passover.

For the deliverance of this great apostle, the church made constant prayers to God; which it pleased the Almighty to answer. For as Peter, the very night before Herod intended to put him to death, was sleeping between two soldiers, who guarded him; an angel appeared in heavenly brightness, and awaking him, bad him rise. His chains immediately falling from his hands, he threw his mantle about him, and followed the angel; scarce knowing, whether he were yet awake. Under this divine conduct, he passed securely through all the guards; and came to the large iron-gate, which led into the city. This opened of its own accord; and as they were now in the street, the angel left him.—Peter come intirely to himself; and conceiving fully the gracious deliverance

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1. This Herod was the grandson of Herod the great; and is represented by Josephus, as a pious prince, greatly observant of the ceremonies of the Jewish religion. If this was the case, he was probably led by his Jewish prejudices to persecute christianity.

2. The early martyrdom of St. James, was no doubt an instructive lesson to the apostolic college, by shewing them, that the miraculous powers, with which they were endowed, could not secure them from the malice of their enemies.

4. Four quaternions of soldiers were sixteen; four of whom watched by turns.

6. To whom he was chained, according to the Roman custom.

12. he had received, went to the house of a religious woman of the
 name of Mary, the mother of Mark, where many pious christians
 13. were then assembled at prayer.—On Peter's knocking, a young
 14. woman went to the gate; but instead of opening it, on knowing his
 15. voice, she ran with joy to inform the family; but they paying little
 16. regard to her at first, were above measure astonished, on finding
 17. it was really Peter himself.—The apostle then related to them
 the circumstances of his great deliverance; and desiring them to
 inform his brethren; retired himself to a place of security.
18. 19. In the morning there was great confusion among the soldiers;
 and tho Herod, on examining the case could find no circum-
 stances of neglect, he ordered the whole guard to be put to death.
20. But that wicked prince knew not how soon his own end was
 approaching. From Judea he went to Cæsarea; where the Ty-
 21. rians, fearing his displeasure, had sent ambassadors to pacify him.
 On a set day he gave audience to them; and being magnificently
 22. arrayed, he made a solemn oration; which was received, as if

13. It was common among the Jews, to give the names of plants, and flowers, to their female children. Rhoda signifies a rose; Tamar, a palm; Edeffa, a myrtle; Sufannah, a lily. Sometimes they would give the names of animals also: as Tabitha, and Dorcas, signify in Hebrew, and Greek, a goat, or roe.

15. The text says, they supposed it was ο αγγελος αυτου. Some imagine they meant, what we call in English, his *ghost*: others, his *guardian angel*: others only a *messenger*, from him.

17. It is James the less, who is mentioned here: James, the son of Zebedee, had been put to death.

20. *Because their country, was nourished by the king's country.* The Tyrians, who were intirely a trading people, neglected agriculture; and received their chief supplies of corn from Judea.

22. We have the same account from Josephus; with many other circumstances; but none that differ materially from these. Antiq. lib. XIX. ch. viii. What the apostle calls *royal apparel*, Josephus tells us, was a robe of silver tissue, most curiously wrought; on which the rays of the sun shining, as he sat on his throne, exalted above the people, gave him a most splendid, and dazzling appearance.

it had come from a God. For his pride, cruelty, and other sins, he was struck by the hand of the Almighty with a terrible disease, which put an end to his life.—The gospel however was only the more confirmed by the opposition he had given it.

23.

24.

25.
C H A P.
XIII.
1.

In the mean time Barnabas, and Saul, having delivered the contributions, which had been intrusted to them from Antioch, returned thither again; where they found the christian church considerably increased.—Besides these two great apostles, three others of singular eminence presided over it, at that time; Simeon, who was surnamed Niger; and Lucius of Cyrene; and Manaen, who had been the friend of Herod, but having left his connections with that prince, had embraced the christian religion.

Saul, and Barnabas had not been long at Antioch; before they were ordered by the particular designation of the Holy Spirit to leave that city, and preach the gospel in other parts; and a solemn day of fasting, and prayer was appointed to supplicate God for their success. Under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, therefore they went to Seleucia, taking Mark with them, as their assistant. From Seleucia they sailed to Cyprus; and beginning at Salamis, they preached the gospel in the Jewish synagogues through the whole island as far as Paphos.

2. 3.

4. 5.

At Paphos resided the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a well-disposed man; who hearing of the two apostles, sent for

6. 7. 8.

23. Put an end to his life—or as it is expressed in the figurative language of scripture; *The angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory.* The pride of heart which made him assume divine powers to himself, was the *particular* crime here laid to his charge: but he was probably a wicked prince in many other respects, notwithstanding the account of Josephus.

them, and desired them to give him some account of the new religion they taught.

9. In the family of the proconsul lived a Jewish magian, of the
 10. 11. name of Elymas; who being jealous of the apostles, endeavoured
 to prevent the proconsul's paying any attention to them. On this,
 Saul, (who took also the name of Paul) turning to him with
 that dignity, which the Holy Spirit inspired, rebuked his subtil
 and mischievous opposition to a doctrine, the purity, and evidence
 of which he could not but acknowledge. He then told him, that
 as he had voluntarily suffered his understanding to be thus darkened,
 God would punish him, for a time at least, with the loss of his
 eyes. On this a darkness fell immediately on him; and he disco-
 12. vered by stretching out his hands, and seeking for somebody to
 lead him, that he was utterly deprived of sight. The proconsul,
 impressed with the doctrine of Paul, and struck with this great
 miracle; immediately professed himself a christian.

13. The two apostles soon after, leaving Paphos, went to Perga, in
 14. Pamphylia; where Mark left them; chusing rather to go to Jeru-
 salem.—From Perga they continued their journey to Antioch in
 15. Pisidia. Here they went to the synagogue on the sabbath-day; and
 after the reading of the law, and the prophets, being asked by the
 rulers of the synagogue, if they had any thing to say to the people;
 16. Paul desired their attention with the motion of his hand; and ad-
 dressing himself to the Jews in particular; and to all in general,

9. Some writers think the apostle took the name of Paul, in compliment to Sergius Paulus, his first Gentile convert. Others suppose, that it was only the name he was generally known by, among the Greeks, and Romans; as John in England, is Jean in France, and Hans in Holland.

13. The reason of Mark's leaving Paul, at this time, is no where given. It is certain, that Paul was much offended at it. See Acts xv. 38.

14. To distinguish it from *Antioch in Syria*, from whence they had come.

15. The rulers of the synagogue were authorized to allow whom they pleased, to preach.

who

who believed in the true God, he took occasion from the sacred books, which had just been read to them, to recapitulate in few words, the Jewish history, in order to deduce the Messiah from David, according to God's constant promises to that prince; reminding them, at the same time, of the miraculous manner, in which Christ had been introduced by John the baptist; whose testimony of Jesus's dignity, and of his own inferiority, was equally full.—The apostle then recommended earnestly to their serious attention, the gracious offer of salvation through the gospel. He mentioned the circumstances of Jesus's death; and shewed, that all the malice of his enemies against him, was only a direct completion of the predictions of the prophets. He adverted next to his glorious resurrection; which was proved by many of his followers, who saw him alive, and attended him through a course of several days.—Thus, said he, we have opened to you those gracious promises made to our fathers, which he hath now fulfilled in sending Jesus Christ into the world: *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*—And as to that great event, his resurrection from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, *I will give you*, said God, *the sure mercies of David: thou shalt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption.* This prophecy, he told them, alluded to the resurrection of the Messiah. Of David no prophecy of this kind could be spoken. He saw corruption; and so did every one, except Jesus, who had been raised from the dead. They all died again, and saw corruption.—Paul having thus proved Jesus to be the Messiah; proceeded to point out his office. He came, said he, to offer remission of sins to man through faith, and repentance; and

17. 18. 19.
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33. Most interpreters consider the *raising up* of Jesus in this verse as spoken of his *resurrection*: but the context, and application of the prophecy rather give the sense of Christ's *being raised from the seed of David*. See Ps. ii. 7—Isa. lv. 3—Ps. xvi. 10.

to make that effectual atonement for him, which the expiatory sacrifices of the law could not make.—Lastly, the apostle warned his audience not to be found in the number of those, whom the prophet threatened with destruction, if they refused this gracious offer; and rejected a dispensation so clearly proved, as this certainly was.

After the apostle had ended his discourse (which had been heard with great attention) the synagogue broke up; and many of the Gentiles, as they left the place, desired to hear the same discourse on the next sabbath: while Paul earnestly exhorted several of the Jews, and proselyte-Gentiles, who had been convinced by what they had heard, and professed themselves christians, to continue steadfast in the faith.

On the next sabbath day, almost the whole city met together, to attend the apostle. But the unbelieving Jews, of whom there were many in those parts, being jealous of this popularity, had now drawn together a party; and mixing with the audience, interrupted Paul's discourse, and turned the whole city into a scene of confusion.

The apostle, with great plainness, told them, that it was necessary for the gospel first to be preached to them; but as they had hardened themselves against it, it should now, according to the predictions of the prophets, be offered to the Gentiles.—When the Gentiles heard this, they glorified God; and as many, as were well-disposed,

41. The prophecy, to which St. Paul alludes, is contained in Heb. i. 5. where the prophet threatens the people with the Babylonish captivity. St. Paul's *immediate* reference seems to be to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; but he seems also, like our Saviour, to refer to the next life.

47. The prophecy, to which St. Paul particularly refers, is Isa. xlix. 6.

48. The word *ταρτω* in the original, may well signify *disposed*, or *prepared for*; but the translators of our English testament, give many words a predestinarian sense, which there is no reason for.

believed

believed the gospel ; which began now to spread through all the country. 49.

This success still further enraged the Jews ; who stirring up all whom they could influence, raised such an opposition against Paul, and Barnabas, as obliged them to leave the place. Giving up therefore these infidel Jews to the judgment of God by the ceremony of shaking off the dust of their feet against them†, they bore the persecution they had received with holy joy ; and retired to Iconium.—God did not however desert the church, which had thus planted in Pisidia ; but watched over it, and replenished it with his Holy Spirit. 50. 51. 52.

At Iconium the apostles preached in the synagogue ; and had, at first, great success. They performed many miracles also in testimony of their doctrine ; and numbers both of Jews, and Greeks professed the faith. C H A P. XIV. 1. 2. 3.

But here also the unbelieving Jews followed the example of those in Pisidia ; and made it their business to form a party against the progress of the gospel. Afterwards gaining the magistrates on their side, they laid a scheme to seize the two apostles, and put them to death. But they being aware of the design, fled to Lystra, a city of Lycaonia ; and preached the gospel sometimes there ; and sometimes at Derbe, and other places, in that neighbourhood. 4. 5. 6. 7.

It fell out, as Paul was preaching at the former of these towns, that a person, who had been lame from his birth, was among his hearers ; and the apostle perceiving he had faith to be healed, bad him stand upright on his feet ; on which he became instantly sound.—When the inhabitants of Lystra saw this, they ran about 8. 9. 10. 11.

† See a note on Matt. x. 14.

11. It was very agreeable to the heathen creed, that the Gods should visit the lower world. Even Tully tells us, the Gods must have a human form, as they never appeared in any other. De Nat. Deorum.

12. the city, crying out, that the Gods were come down among them ;
 13. calling Barnabas, Jupiter ; and Paul, Mercury, because they ob-
 served he was the principal speaker. Nay to such a height did
 their zealous phrenzy carry them, that the priest of Jupiter began
 to make preparations for a solemn sacrifice to them.

14. When the two apostles, Paul, and Barnabas, heard this, they
 rent their cloaths, and ran in among the people, crying out ;
 15. " What mean you by this ? We are men like yourselves : and are
 " so far from suffering any devotion to be paid to us, that it is the
 " great end of our doctrine to call men from the worship of false
 " Gods, and teach them to acknowledge one only God, who made
 16. " heaven, and earth, and all things therein ; and who amidst all
 17. " the blindness, that hath overspread the world, hath always given
 " sufficient evidence of his divine nature, in the works of creation,
 " to recall mankind from the absurdity of worshipping idols."——
 18. Even with this language they were scarce able to repress the zeal of
 the people.

19. This popular favour however soon took another turn. The un-
 believing Jews from Pisidia, and Iconium, coming hither also,
 infused their spirit into the inhabitants of Lystra ; and a tumult being
 raised, Paul was seized, and carried out of the city ; where he was
 20. stoned, and left as dead. By the assistance however of his friends he
 revived ; and retired, the next day, with Barnabas to Derbe.

13. *Jupiter, which was before their city* : that is, whose statue stood at the entrance of their city.—*Brought oxen and garlands unto the gates* : that is, brought oxen crowned with garlands.

Victima labe carens, et præstantissima formâ

Sistitur ante aras, vittis insignis, et auro.

Ovid's Met.

20. Some interpret this as a miraculous resurrection from the dead. I think it rather appears otherwise, from the conclusion of the 19th verse, *supposing he had been dead.*

Here

Here too the apostles preached the gospel, and converted many to the christian faith. They afterwards returned to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia; where they confirmed the converts they had made; and exhorted them to continue stedfast in the faith; notwithstanding those persecutions, which (they saw) had arisen, and must necessarily arise again.—Then, after solemn prayer, and fasting, ordaining elders to preside over the several churches; and recommending them to the grace of God, they passed through Pisidia, and Pamphilia; and continuing some time at Perga, they went to Attalia; and from that city by sea to Antioch in Syria, from whence, about two years before, they had set out.

On their arrival there, they called an assembly of the church; and gave them an account of God's gracious dealings through their ministry; and shewed them, that a door was now fully opened for the gospel among the Gentiles.—After this circuit through different parts of Asia minor, they continued sometime with the disciples at Antioch.

The first thing that disturbed the peace of the church of Antioch, was an opinion introduced by certain judaizing christians from Jerusalem, with regard to circumcision; which they thought all christians were *obliged* to receive.—This opinion was opposed by Paul, and Barnabas, with great warmth. But when it was found they could not suppress it by their own authority; it was determined, that those two apostles, with some others, should consult the church at Jerusalem. In their way thither, through Phœnicia, and Samaria, they occasioned great joy among all christians by the accounts they gave of the conversion of the Gentiles.

CHAP.
XV.

1.

2.

3.

23. These elders seem to be considered next in dignity to the apostles. Their office appears to be described Acts xx. 28.

4. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they acquainted the apostles,
 5. and elders, with all the transactions of the church at Antioch: and
 then informed them of the dissention which had been introduced by
 6. some judaizing christians, of the sect of the Pharisees, with regard
 to circumcision, and other points of the law of Moses. This
 question the apostles, and elders, resolved to examine in a full
 assembly; which they accordingly called.

7. As in this assembly there were many christians, who were
 strenuous upholders of the law of Moses, the question was agitated
 with some warmth on both sides.—The great advocate for the
 full liberty of the christian converts, was Peter. He put the
 8. assembly in mind of the case of Cornelius; of whom circumcision
 9. had not been required. He dwelt on the descent of the Holy
 Ghost on several Gentile converts; which was argument sufficient,
 that God had fully accepted them without circumcision; alledging
 that their hearts were purified, not by the ceremonies of the law, but
 10. by faith alone. Why therefore, said he, do you go about to put a
 yoke on the necks of the Gentile-christians, which neither we,
 11. nor our fathers were able to bear? We believe that we as Jews
 cannot be saved, but through the gospel; why should we then
 make the Gentiles consider the law as sufficient, which in our
 own case we acknowledge to be ineffectual?

12. Peter's speech was seconded by Paul, and Barnabas, who in-
 formed the assembly, that God's dealings with such of the Gen-

4. This seems to be that journey to Jerusalem of which Paul speaks Gal. ii. 1.

4. There should only be a comma, or semicolon after this verse, as it is plain the 5th verse is a continuation of what the two apostles from Antioch related.

10. Some interpreters leave *οὐ* out of this sentence; as it is not found in some of the best MSS; and tends only to embarrass the sense. The expression then is, *Why do you attempt, or endeavour to put, &c.*—Πειραζω however in this sense, is not often, I believe, used with an accusative.

tiles, as they had converted, were exactly similar to the account, which Peter had just given them.

When they had all spoken their sentiments, James stood up, and said; “ Peter hath just explained to you the circumstances, which attended the first conversion of the Gentiles—a conversion directed by the immediate interposition of God. And if you examine the prophets you will find them all speaking the same language. No mention is made of the covenant of circumcision; but that the defection of the house of Israel should be restored by calling in all the nations of the earth to worship God in holiness, and righteousness of life. From the beginning, no doubt, God respected all things; and would certainly have enjoined circumcision, if it had been necessary. I see no reason therefore to make the Gentiles conform to it.—And yet it may be proper to enjoin them to abstain from some things, which give great offence to the Jews; as the rites, and pollutions of heathen temples—fornication—and the use of blood: and this prohibition should be the more general, as there are few towns, where there are any christian-converts, in which the Jewish religion is not excised.”†

13. 14.

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This

13. 19. James says, *Men and brethren hearken unto me—my sentence is.* It is well Peter did not say this; it had been a good argument for the supremacy of the Pope.

17. The text quoted here is Amos ix. 11, 12. I have given what appears to me the sense of it; and what agrees with the apostle's argument. But we do not find this text with any exactness in our vulgar translation of the bible. The apostle has evidently quoted from the LXX; which differs a little from our translation; but agrees exactly with the apostle:

† This whole passage is acknowledged, on all hands, to be a difficult one.

The first question, that arises, is, whether the prohibition of blood, is meant as a *general*, or as an *occasional* precept? Many things have been said with much force on both sides of the question. I know no writer, who has drawn up the arguments for its being a precept of *general observation*, in stronger array, than Mr. Stackhouse: yet still, I think, the mind revolts from this idea, when we consider the liberal principles of the christian religion—so little

22. 23.

This opinion of James being agreeable to the whole assembly, they resolved to send two persons of great eminence from their own body, Judas, and Silas, together with Paul, and Barnabas,

affected by outward observances—and so wholly delighting in inward purity—when we consider what a number of particular passages there are in scripture, which mention the heart only as the receptacle of virtue and vice—when we reflect, that St. Paul tells us, we may eat any thing set before us, asking no questions for conscience sake—and when we consider lastly, that the prohibition of eating blood, is not seconded by one single text of a similar kind, throughout the whole new testament. If it had been meant as a general precept, we might certainly have expected to see it confirmed by other passages; or, at least, secured against mistake in those passages, which seem so directly to oppose it.

But still if we allow the precept to have been *occasional* only, how comes it, that this occasional precept is joined with *fornication*? Is this also an occasional precept? By no means: we are sufficiently guarded against such a misconstruction by repeated passages in scripture. So that here we are not left in doubt.

But why then is a *precept of moral obligation* thus classed among *indifferent things*?—Because it was considered in that light by those heathen converts, to whom the decree was sent. Nay, by many of them, we know well, that fornication was considered as a part of religious worship; and is therefore commonly joined with idolatry; as in 1 Cor. x. 7. Eph. v. 5. 1 Cor. v. 11. Rev. ii. 14, 20. Wisd. of Sol. xiv. 25, &c. 2 Mac. vi. 4. Some to get rid of the difficulty, for *πορνείας* read *χοιρείας*, to abstain from *swine's flesh*; but this, I believe, rests on no authority.

The last difficulty of this passage relates to the 21st verse; *For Moses, in old time, hath in every city, them that preach him; being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.*—Some explain this passage, as if the apostle had said, *We need not mention these things to the Jews, because, as they constantly read the books of Moses, they are perfectly acquainted with them.* But this seems to have nothing to do with the *intention of the decree*; which is so far from endeavouring to rectify the opinions of the Jews, that it is not even addressed to them. It is addressed only to *them which from among the Gentiles were turned to God.* The intention therefore of this passage seems to be, as I have endeavoured to explain it, that wherever the Jews, and Christians were found together, this decree should be carried, and presented to the Gentiles; in order to prevent that offence, which might otherwise be given to the Jews.

One thing more, with regard to this text, may be observed; which is, that the words *καὶ τὰ πρῶτα* are omitted in many MSS; and universally unknown to the Latin fathers, who leave them intirely out in all their quotations. And indeed the words seem of no use in the text; for the only reason for abstaining from *things strangled*, is, that the blood might not be eaten with the flesh.

to the church of Antioch, with the apostolic decree, which was written in these words.

“ Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain persons of our
assembly going over to you, have, without any authority from us,
pretended to lay you under an injunction to be circumcised, and
to observe the Mosaic law—it hath seemed good to us assembled
in council, to send Judas, and Silas, together with our beloved
Paul, and Barnabas, who have hazarded their lives for the gospel,
to inform you, that, agreeably to the sense of the Holy Spirit,
we think proper to lay nothing upon you, but these things—
to abstain from eating meat offered to idols—from fornication—
and from blood: from which if you keep yourselves, you will
avoid giving offence. Fare you well.”

This decree being read to the church of Antioch, occasioned
great joy; to which Judas, and Silas contributed not a little; con-
firming by their own private exhortations, the authority of the
church of Jerusalem.—Some time after, Judas returned again
into Judea; but Silas chose to stay longer at Antioch; where Paul

28. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us—that is, it was agreeable to the sense of the Holy Spirit, as declared in the case of Cornelius, &c.—that the Gentiles need not be circumcised in order to become Christians. The council does not seem to assert, that the Holy Ghost immediately directed this decree. If it had, there would have been no occasion for any reasoning about the matter.—These necessary things, says the text. In some copies we have a different reading; which may be rendered, these things which are, at this time, necessary.*

29. *It is worth while to compare the mildness of the conclusion of this decree, (from which if you keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well;) with the anathemas which used commonly to conclude the decrees of popes, and councils.*

32. Judas, and Silas are here called *prophets*. The word *προφητης* sometimes signifies a person, *who speaks for another*; as a teacher in an assembly, may be called a prophet; or, as Aaron was called Moses's prophet. It is not clear in what sense Judas, and Silas are here called *prophets*: but it seems rather probable, that they are called so, as speaking the sense of the church at Jerusalem.

also,

also, and Barnabas continued, with many others; all uniting in the great work of preaching the gospel.

36. Paul having now been a considerable time at Antioch, proposed
 37. to Barnabas, to make another circuit among the several churches,
 38. which they had established. Barnabas closing with the proposal,
 39. mentioned Mark, as a proper person to take with them; which Paul
 40. 41. would by no means consent to, as he had left them so abruptly at
 Pamphilia. This drew on so sharp a contention between these two
 apostles, that they separated. Barnabas taking Mark, who was his
 nephew†, embarked for Cyprus; while Paul accompanied by Silas,
 and attended by the prayers of the church, took the circuit he had
 proposed, through Syria, and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

C H A P.
XVI.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

At Lystra he found a young convert of eminent piety, of the name of Timothy: and thinking him a proper person to be the companion of his labours, he complied so far with the prejudices of the Jews in those parts, as to circumcise him; for they all knew, that his

38. See chap. xiii. 13.

39. Here is an eminent example of imperfection in these great apostles. Mark had probably been much to blame in leaving Paul; and Paul perhaps now as much in resenting it so strongly: and both he, and Barnabas, in making a formal quarrel. They discovered plainly, as they had told the people of Lystra, that *they were men of like passions with themselves*. Paul however was afterwards perfectly reconciled to Mark: and speaks of him, as one of his great comforts in his labours. See Col. iv. 11.

† See Col. iv. 10.

3. Tho it is evident enough, that Paul did not circumcise Timothy from any religious principle, but merely in compliance with the prejudices of the Jews; yet it must be owned, there was something rather singular in his doing it just at that critical time, when he himself was carrying a decree against circumcision. The fact seems to be, that circumcision was generally allowed to Jews. Timothy was circumcised, because his mother was of Jewish extraction: but the same apostle who allowed this, forbade Titus to conform to this ceremony, because he was a Greek. Indeed none of the apostles seem to have had any objection to circumcision in *itself*: but only as it was imposed under the idea of being *necessary to salvation*.

4. It is a good observation of L'Enfant that the word *δευμα*, which is here translated a *decree*, always signifies something temporary, and ceremonial; and not of perpetual obligation.

father

father was a Greek; tho his mother was a Jewish christian.— Having added this young convert to his company, Paul proceeded to the several cities, which he meant to visit: and removed their scruples; by giving them copies of the decree, which the apostolic assembly had made at Jerusalem.

Having passed through several parts of Asia, where the gospel had already been planted, he determined to go into some other provinces, where it had not yet been preached: but in this design he was over-ruled by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and went to Troas.—Here he was directed by a vision from heaven, to visit Macedonia; and accordingly he, and his companions, of whom Luke was one, took the nearest way to Philippi, the chief city of that part of the country.

At Philippi the Jews were allowed a place of worship at a little distance from the city, near the side of a river. Here therefore Paul resorted on the sabbath day; and found chiefly religious women; among whom one Lydia, a Jewish profelyte, a dealer in purple, being convinced by Paul's arguments, was baptized with all her family; and intreated him, and his company to lodge at her house.

There was at that time, at Philippi, a young woman, possessed with an evil spirit, who afforded gain, by her divinations, to some people, who employed her. This demoniac followed Paul, and his

6. 7. It does not absolutely appear from the text, that the gospel had not been preached in Asia, and Bithynia: but it seems probable, the people of those countries might not be yet prepared for the gospel; or there might be other reasons, why Macedonia was at this time preferable.

10. In this verse St. Luke first alludes to himself. But of whatever use he might be in these journeys to the christian cause, he passes all over in modest silence.

13. Dr. Lardner shews, that it was very usual for the Jews, in foreign countries to have houses of prayer allowed by the sides of rivers, or on the sea-shore. See his Credib. part I. ch. III.

17. The demoniacs, during the life of our blessed Saviour, always acknowledged his power—on what principle we are unacquainted—perhaps through flattery.

companions,

18. companions, as they went to the synagogue, crying out, These are the servants of the most high God, who shew us the way of salvation. On this Paul, ordering the evil spirit to leave her, she was perfectly restored.

19. 20. 21. Her employers thus finding the hopes of all further gain disappointed, seized Paul, and Silas, and dragging them before the magistrates, accused them of disturbing the peace of the city; and of introducing new rites, and customs, which were contrary to those
22. 23. 24. already established. The tumult increasing, the magistrates ordered them to be scourged, and thrown into prison; with a strict command
25. to the jailor, to keep them safely.—But at midnight, as Paul,
26. and Silas were singing praises to God, an earthquake suddenly shook the foundations of the prison; and burst open all the gates.—
27. The keeper awakened by the noise, and finding all laid open, took it for granted that the prisoners were fled; and drawing his
28. sword, was going to kill himself: when Paul, seeing his frantic action, with a loud voice cried out, Do yourself no harm; we are
29. all here. On this the keeper calling for a light, was struck with the composure of Paul, and Silas, in the midst of this terrible convulsion; and comparing the greatness of their behaviour, with the miracle of the demoniac, he was convinced of their divine
30. power; and falling down before them, he brought them into his
31. 32. house, and asked them with great emotion, What he should do to be saved? The apostle, in few words, explained to him the terms of the gospel; and held out to him, a belief in Jesus Christ.—
33. 34. The keeper then washing their stripes, and refreshing them, received baptism himself, with his whole family; who all joined in praising God for his gracious mercies to them.

35. The next day the magistrates, somewhat ashamed of their hasty proceedings, sent privately to the keeper of the prison, to dismiss
36. the two men, who had been committed to his charge. This message the keeper, with much joy, imparted to the apostles. But Paul,
with

with great spirit, answered, they were Roman citizens; and had been used in a manner, in which no Roman citizen ought to be used. What? said he, shall they beat, and imprison us uncon-
demned; and then privately dismiss us? Let them come themselves,
and make an apology for what they have done.—The magistrates
on hearing they were Roman citizens, were much alarmed; and
coming to the prison, intreated them quietly to leave the city.—
They stayed however some little time at the house of Lydia, com-
forting their friends; and then leaving Philippi, went through
Amphipolis, and Apollonia, to Thessalonica, the principal city of
Macedonia.

37.
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39.
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C H A P.
XVII.
1.

At Thessalonica also the Jews were allowed a synagogue; in
which Paul, during three sabbath-days, explained the principles of
the christian religion; proving from the prophecies of the old
testament, that, that Jesus, whom he preached, must needs both
have suffered, and have risen from the dead. This doctrine had
such effect, that a great multitude of the proselyte Greeks; and many
of the Jews also believed.

But the success of the apostles soon raised a party of unbelieving
Jews against them; who getting together a number of disorderly
people, attacked the house of Jason, where they lodged; and not
being able to find the apostles, who had escaped, they carried
Jason, and some other christians, whom they met with, before
the magistrates, and informed them of the great irregularities, which
these people had committed in other places, as well as at Thessa-
lonica; setting up, as they said, in opposition to the Roman au-
thority, a certain king of the name of Jesus. They then laid an
information against Jason for harbouring such seditious persons.
This violent charge put the magistrates under some difficulty.
They saw the frivolousness of it: at the same time they could
not intirely neglect it. So they took security of Jason, and of the
others, and dismissed them.

A a a

Paul,

10. Paul, and Silas, in the mean time, had been sent privately to Berea; where with the same freedom, which they had used at Thessalonica, they went into the Jewish synagogue, and preached.
 11. Here the Jews were much better disposed, than at Thessalonica: for they were at the pains of searching the scriptures, and comparing them with the doctrines, which Paul preached. Many
 12. of them after this examination, believed; and many Greeks likewise of both sexes.

13. But when the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica had heard of the ready acceptance, which the Bereans had given to the gospel, they came to Berea, and excited the people there against the apostles.
 14. 15. As Paul was the most obnoxious person, he thought it prudent to avoid their fury; and going to the sea-side, as if he had intended to embark; he turned short, and went to Athens; sending orders to Silas, and Timothy to follow him there.

16. While Paul waited at Athens for his companions, he was grieved to see a city, so celebrated for learning, addicted, in so gross a manner, to idolatry. He took every opportunity therefore of reasoning both with the Jews in their synagogues; and with the Athenians, whom he accidentally met in public places.—As
 17. Athens was at that time, the school of philosophy, the apostle began soon to excite attention; and some Epicurean, and Stoic philosophers, partly in contempt, and partly through curiosity (for the Athenians were a very inquisitive people) brought him into their public assemblies, and desired to know, what that new, and

13. The word *σαλευω*, which is translated *stirred up*, expresses properly that kind of agitated motion, which is given to the sea in a storm; and admirably describes the raging of a popular tumult.

16. Petronius, who lived about the time of St. Paul, says, that at Athens, *Facilius possis Deum, quam hominem, invenire.*

21. This character is given of the Athenians both by Demosthenes, and Thucydides.

uncommonly strange doctrine was, which he had advanced? alluding to what Paul had said, with regard to the resurrection.

On this opening, Paul began by telling them, how much he
 22. 23. thought them addicted to religion. Not content, said he, with
 that variety of Gods you worship, I met with an altar inscribed
 TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. This proves however that there
 24. is a God, whom you allow you do not know. That God I now
 preach unto you—the Creator of all things—the Lord of heaven
 and earth—who is not confined to human temples—nor in want
 25. of sacrifice, or any thing, which human power can supply; in-
 somuch as every thing derives its existence, and preservation from
 him. This great God is the common father of all mankind;
 26. whose several nations he hath distributed over the face of the earth,
 according to his own good pleasure; and hath required them all
 27. to acknowledge, and worship him, from a just sense of their
 28. dependence on him, for every blessing they enjoy—their life; their
 breath; and very existence. The apostle then quoted a passage

22. Dr. Lardner contends, and I think with great justice, that *θεοιδαίμονες, τῆρες* should be taken in a good sense, and not rendered *superstitious*. (See *Credib.* vol. I. p. 193 in a note). St. Paul shewed, at all times, great delicacy towards the opinions of others; and plainly at this time, did not mean to give any offence to the Athenians.

23. Diogenes Laertius in his life of Epimenides (lib. I. page 29) tells us, that the Athenians, being afflicted with a pestilence, invited Epimenides to lustrate their city. The method he took, was to carry several sheep to the Areopagus; from whence they were left to wander, as they pleased, under the observation of people sent to attend them. As each sheep lay down, it was sacrificed, on the spot, to the propitious God. By this ceremony the city was relieved. But it was still unknown, what God was propitious. An altar therefore was erected at every place, where a sheep had been sacrificed, to the unknown God.

23. With what great address the apostle turns the superstition of the Athenians against themselves!—He also makes an admirable apology for himself. He had been accused of setting forth strange Gods—to which charge he answers, that he found among them an altar inscribed to the unknown God.

28. Aratus was a Cilician poet; the countryman of Paul. Nearly the same expression is found in Cleanthes's hymn to Jupiter. See *Hen. Step. poet. philos.* p. 49.

29. from Aratus, in which that poet calls mankind *the offspring of God*. If, continued he, we are the offspring of God, let us consider, in what light we are called so. It is in our minds, not in our bodies, that we resemble him. We must not therefore think that images of gold, and silver are any representations of the deity.—
30. Thus far however God hath born with the ignorance of mankind. But now he hath revealed his will to them explicitly; and commands them every where to repent; and prepare themselves for that awful time, when he will call them all into judgment, before Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the world; of whose divine authority he gave sufficient evidence by raising him from the dead.
- 31.

32. This discourse, especially the latter part of it, with regard to the resurrection of the dead, affected this assembly of philosophers in different ways. The Epicureans treated it with great contempt: while the Stoics thinking there was something plausible in the notion, desired they might hear the apostle on the same subject again——Before he left Athens however, he made many converts; among whom were some people of consequence; particularly Dionysius, one of the members of the council.

33. 34.
CHAP.
XVIII.
1. 2.

- From Athens Paul went to Corinth: and finding there a christian Jew, of the name of Aquila, who had been driven from Rome, with all his countrymen, by a decree of the emperor Claudius; he abode with him; and as Aquila, and he were both tent-makers, they wrought together. On the sabbath-days Paul taught
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- 4.

2. Suetonius tells us, in the life of Claudius, that, that Emperor, *Judeos, impulsore Christo, assidue tumultuantes, Roma expulit.*

3. It may appear a little singular, that Paul, who was brought up in a learned profession, should be a tent-maker: but we must consider, that the Jews of all conditions taught their children some mechanic business. It was a common saying among them, *that he who taught his son no business, bred him a thief.*—The same custom still prevails in the east. Even the Grand Seignior himself is always taught some mechanic art. Sir Paul Ricaut tells us, that the Grand Seignior, to whom he went ambassador, had learned to make wooden spoons.

in the synagogue, applying himself chiefly to the Jews, and proselytes.—Afterwards, when Silas, and Timothy joined him from Macedonia, they all united in the most earnest application to the Jews; endeavouring to convince them from the prophets, that Jesus was certainly the Messiah.—But their zealous endeavours were received with so hardened an opposition, that Paul finding it to no purpose to continue among them, gathered up his garment, and shaking it out, accompanied that significant action by telling them, he now gave them up—they must take their guilt upon themselves—he would turn to the Gentiles. And from this time he preached no more in the synagogue, but in the house of one Justus, who lived near it.—Notwithstanding however this violent opposition from the Jews, Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed; and a great number of the Corinthians.

As Paul was now about to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and must therefore expect to irritate the Jews still more, it pleased God to give him the comfort of a heavenly vision, in which he was ordered to continue where he was, amidst a well disposed people—to preach the truth boldly—and to trust in the protection of heaven.—On the authority of this vision Paul continued a year, and a half longer at Corinth, preaching the gospel; and met with no opposition, till Gallio was appointed proconsul of Achaia; whom the Jews hoped to interest in their favour. With this view, they brought Paul before him in a tumultuary manner;

6. It is rendered in our translation, *he shook his raiment*; which implies a degree of passion, and violence, unbecoming the apostolical character. I have given it another interpretation, led by the word *ἐκτινασσω*, which literally signifies, to *shake from*, or *shake out of*. The action seems to be merely symbolical, and by no means passionate. The story of the Roman ambassador, who *shook war from his gown*, will be remembered.

12. It is remarkable, that Gallio was the brother of the philosopher Seneca; and is described by him as a man of the sweetest disposition. Statius mentions him also in the same amiable light.

accusing.

13. 14. accusing him of introducing a new mode of worship. But Gallio immediately comprehending the whole affair, told the Jews plainly, that if it were a matter of right, and wrong, he would readily
 15. enter into it: but as he saw it was a question with regard to ceremonies, and points of religion, of which he was no judge; he gave them to understand, he should never trouble himself about
 16. such matters; and ordered them immediately to leave the court.—
 17. Imboldened by this, the Greeks, who favoured Paul, took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, who had been the chief mover in the affair, and beat him on the spot: while Gallio, thinking probably it was a punishment he well deserved, took no notice of the impropriety of the action.

18. After this, Paul continued sometime longer at Corinth; and then went into Syria, accompanied by Aquila, and his wife Priscilla; having in his way, shaven his head at Cenchrea, as a testimony that he had finished a vow, in which he had engaged.

19. 20. 21. At Ephesus he found a synagogue, where he preached; and was so well received by the Jews there, that he was much pressed to stay longer: but he thought himself under a necessity to keep the ensuing feast at Jerusalem. He left however Aquila, and Priscilla

17. They beat him perhaps not in the court room; but as he left it.—It is however rather doubtful, whether Sosthenes was not St. Paul's friend: see 1 Cor. i. 1. The relation is accompanied with so few circumstances, that it is difficult to collect the real fact. There is a various reading which places οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the room of οἱ Ἕλληνες. If this should be the true one, it gives a different sense to the passage.

18. Some imagine this to have been a Nazarite vow; and yet it does not correspond with the Levitical institution, which required the Nazarite to *shave his head at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*. Num. vi. 8.—It is commonly thought to have been a vow for some signal deliverance.

19. Ephesus was the principal city of proconsular Asia. It stood on the side of a hill, overlooking a beautiful and very extensive plain, watered by the river Caister.

21. Not from any principle of conscience; but probably because he might meet at Jerusalem a great concourse of Jews, and many of his own converts.

with

with them, till his return; and then embarking at Ephesus, he landed at Cæsarea; and went to Jerusalem, where he had a conference with the apostles; and from thence went to Antioch in Syria.—There he spent some time; and then visited the several churches of Galatia, and Phrygia, exhorting the new converts to continue steadily in the faith they had professed.

After Paul had left Ephesus, an Alexandrian Jew arrived there, named Apollos, who had been a disciple of John the baptist. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the Hebrew scriptures; and preached the gospel, from such knowledge as he had, with great earnestness. Aquila, and Priscilla having heard him, and finding him not fully informed in the doctrines of the gospel, instructed him more perfectly. Afterwards, when he wished to preach the gospel in Achaia, the Ephesian church gave him letters of recommendation to the christians there. In all that country his services were very eminent; for his eloquence and knowledge in the scriptures, were such, that he greatly convinced the Jews, from the prophetic writings, that Jesus was the Messiah.

In the mean time Paul returned to Ephesus, as he had promised. Here he found some more of the disciples of John; and asked them, Whether they had received the Holy Ghost? To this they answered, they had heard of nothing particular on that subject. He then asked them, Whether they had been baptized in the christian faith? and was informed, they had received no baptism, but that of John. Paul then told them, that John's baptism engaged men only to repentance, till the appearing of the Messiah; but on

C H A P.

XIX.

1. 2.

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26. It is probable he was too much attached to judaism.

2. It is not to be supposed, they had never heard of the Holy Ghost, which their answer seems to imply; but having lived probably in some remote part, they had not heard of the late effusions, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. They knew only what John had occasionally said: see Mat. iii. 11—Mark i. 8—John i. 33.

that

that event it was expected, they should immediately be baptized into the christian faith.—On this they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and Paul laying his hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost, with it's miraculous accompaniments of the spirit of prophecy, and speaking with tongues. The number of these disciples was about twelve.

Paul on his second visit to Ephesus, continued preaching freely in the synagogue about three months. But the Jews raising a violent party against him there, as they had done at Corinth; he separated himself, and his company, from them; and preached afterwards in the school of one Tyrannus. He continued however at Ephesus about two years longer; and had wonderful success, both among the Asiatic Jews, and the Gentiles; being enabled to perform miracles in a very extraordinary manner. He not only cured diseases by speaking a word: but on receiving garments from sick, and possessed people, he healed their several disorders by returning them.

These miracles greatly raised the envy of the Jewish exorcists; who seeing Paul perform them in the name of Jesus, made an effort to perform them in the same manner. Seven sons particularly of Sceva, one of the chief priests, made the attempt. But the possessed man cried out, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you? On this he made a furious attack upon them; and having terrified, and wounded them, put them all to flight. This shewed the power of the apostles over evil spirits so very eminently superior to that of the exorcists, that it drew over great multitudes to adore the name of Jesus. Nay it had such an effect upon people in general, that

13. See note on Matt. xii. 26.

19. Books in general were more valuable before the invention of printing; and these, in particular, might be rendered more so by the many curious figures, and diagrams, which they might contain. If the pieces of silver were shekels at 2s. 4½d. each, the value would be about £5900. If they were denarii, at 7½d. each, the value would be about £1600.

numbers,

numbers, who had practised these magical, and pernicious arts, came to the apostles, confessed their wicked impostures; and bringing their mischievous books, burnt them publicly; tho' their value was very considerable.

Paul having thus settled a church at Ephesus, resolved now, 21.
under the influence of the Spirit, to go through Macedonia, and
Achaia, to Jerusalem; and from thence to Rome. He sent Timo- 22.
thy therefore and Erastus before him into Macedonia to make some
proper dispositions; and himself staid a while longer at Ephesus.

During this interval a violent commotion was stirred up against 23.
him.—In that city lived a certain artizan, named Demetrius, 24. 25. 26.
whose principal occupation it was to make silver ornaments, used 27.
in the worship of Diana; by which many people were enriched.
This person calling together such as wrought in the same
business, of whom there was a considerable body, reminded them
of the profit they had acquired by an employment now likely
to be at an end, if Paul's doctrine against image-worship should be
universally received. Of this, he told them there was a great
likelihood from the attention that had been paid to it, not only in
that city, but in the greatest part of Asia. He bad them consider
also, that not only their livelihood, but their religion itself was in
danger.—This language threw the whole body of artizans into 28.
a ferment; and nothing was heard from every part of the croud;
but voices crying out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!

The day, on which Demetrius had contrived this tumult, was 29.
the great festival-day of the goddess, when games were celebrated to
her honour in the theatre. This set numbers of idle people at
liberty; who being violently instigated against Paul, and not finding

24. These *silver shrines* are supposed to have been small temples, with the goddess in miniature, enshrined; which the devotees of Diana used to set up, as private objects of worship, in their houses. Some suppose them to have been medals.

him, seized Gaias, and Aristarchus, two Macedonian converts, who had been seen with him; and hurried them into the theatre; with a view probably, if they had been suffered, of throwing them
 30. to the wild beasts.—Paul, hearing of this violence, was very desirous to enter the theatre, with an intention; if possible, to
 31. assuage the people: but neither the disciples, nor the principal magistrates, who were his friends, would suffer him.

32. In the mean time the tumult increased; and numbers had now joined it, who did not even know the cause of the disturbance; some crying one thing, and some another.—At this period of
 33. the tumult, the Jewish inhabitants of Ephesus, finding the multitude so divided in their aim; and fearing lest they too should suffer with the christians, drew Alexander through the croud, with a view, that he should explain that matter to the people. He stood
 up therefore, and beckoning with his hand, would have addressed
 34. them. But they finding he was a Jew, would not suffer him to speak; drowning his voice, with one general cry, from every part of the assembly, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!

35. In this situation of things, one of the magistrates rushed into the assembly; and by his presence reducing it a little to order, thus spoke.—“Is there any one, said he, who is ignorant of the high veneration, in which this city holds the great goddess Diana;

31. These magistrates, in the original, are styled *Ἀσιαρχοι*, *chief men of Asia*; and it is from this expression, that some have supposed the public games were now celebrating, which seems very probable; and that these *Ἀσιαρχοι* were deputies from the several cities of Asia, who presided over them.

33. I think the interpretation here given of this passage, is the most probable one. This Alexander was perhaps the same mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 14. See a note there.

33. There cannot be a finer description, in so few words, of a popular tumult, than St. Luke has given us here.

35. It is not well agreed what magistrate is meant here; but it is generally supposed he was the officer, who presided in chief over the public games.

and her image, which is the undoubted offspring of Jupiter. As these things therefore are known to all the world, it is unnecessary to defend them. Let me advise you, therefore, in this matter, to do nothing rashly. These two men, whom you have dragged into the theatre, have neither been guilty of sacrilege, nor of blasphemy. If Demetrius therefore, and the people of his company have any thing to alledge against them, let them carry the affair in a regular way, before the proconsul; where it may be properly determined: or if it relate to any matter not cognizable in the Roman courts, let it be determined in a lawful assembly: but as for this day's tumult, and uproar, for which no reason can be given, it is very probable it may draw upon us the resentment of the Romans."—— This judicious speech had it's effect; and the tumult instantly subsided.

Soon after, Paul calling the disciples together, took a formal leave of them; and followed Timothy and Erastus, as he had intended, into Macedonia. Here he spent some time in exhorting the several churches; and then pursued his journey into Achaia; where he continued three months. From hence he purposed to go by sea into Syria; but hearing, that the Jews intended to way-lay him, he changed his design, and went by land through Macedonia.——In this journey into Asia, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus, his companions, went by sea; and waited for him at Troas: while he took ship at Philippi in Macedonia; and having crossed the Egean sea, came to them; and continued a few days at Troas.

On the first day of the week before his departure, he assembled all the christians of those parts with a view to settle their opinions,

CHAP.
XX.

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7. The word *διαλεγμαι*, signifies sometimes to *dispute*, and *question*, as in Mark ix. 33, and Jude 9. It is more probable therefore that it has that meaning here, than that Paul should continue a set discourse during so many hours.

8. 9. and answer any objections, they might make. Their meeting was in an upper room, where many lights were burning; and as Paul had prejudices of different kinds to remove, he continued the assembly to a late hour. In the mean time, a young man of the name of Eutychus, being not much interested in what passed, fell asleep on a window; and dropped down, on the outside of the house,
10. to the ground; where he was taken up dead. But Paul immediately going down, raised him again to life; and presented him to his
11. friends in perfect health. This was not only a great joy to all, who were immediately connected with him; but was a present
12. miracle to confirm the faith of such as wavered.—As daylight came on, Paul administered the holy sacrament to all the assembly; and then, taking his leave, proceeded on his journey by land to
13. Assos; where his companions met him by sea. There embarking,
14. 15. he sailed past the islands of Mytelene, Chios, and Samos, and landing at Troas, continued his course the next day to Miletus;
16. which is a few miles south of Ephesus. He would not however

8. It is supposed by some interpreters, that as these nocturnal meetings were become matter of objection to christians, Paul chose to have the room well lighted; that people might see from the street what passed. No other reason can well be suggested for our being told, *there were many lights burning*.

12. It is not well determined, whether a common meal is here meant, or the celebration of the eucharist; the same phrase being often used for both. Considering the solemnity of the occasion, commentators are inclined to the latter interpretation: especially as the meeting is introduced with that idea in the 7th verse, where we are told *the disciples came together to break bread*.—Justin Martyr, who wrote only about forty years after St. John's death, speaking of the manner of celebrating sabbath among the christians of his day, says, "that on sabbath the christians both of the city and country meet together, because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection. The writings of the prophets and apostles are first read to us. Then the minister exhorts us to imitate what we have heard. We join next in prayer; and lastly receive the sacrament; when they, who are able, give alms." Apol. II. p. 98.

Pliny's account of the christian sabbath, written a few years before, is nearly the same. "They assemble, says he, speaking of christians, on a set day, before it is light; and bind themselves by a sacrament to do nothing bad." Lib. X. ep. 97.

visit that city, as he feared he might be delayed, and was desirous of keeping the feast of pentecost at Jerusalem. But as he might not have another opportunity of visiting the Ephesian church, he sent for the elders of it, to meet him at Miletus. 17.

Here he reminded them of the laborious life he had led, ever since his first coming to Ephesus; and of the many difficulties, and dangers, he had encountered among the Jews. He reminded them also, of the faithful discharge of his ministry both publicly, and privately—the subject of which had ever been, that repentance, and faith, were the only means of salvation, both to Jew and Gentile.—And now, said he, I am under the direction of the Spirit, on my journey to Jerusalem; not knowing what it may please God to lay upon me: only this I know, that dangers, and difficulties, in some shape, await me.—But these are not the things, which give me pain; if I can only finish my course with joy; and the ministry, which God hath intrusted to me.—Of this however I am persuaded, that you shall see my face no more. I take the present opportunity therefore of testifying to you, that if any man swerve from the truth; I am blameless—I have opened to you the whole counsel of God.—Be you equally attentive, both to your own behaviour, and to the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood; and which the Holy Ghost hath committed to your care.—Many enemies, after my departure, will rise up against it. Many enemies, even among yourselves, shall arise, to seduce you from the truth. Be therefore on your guard; and remember the various cautions, which, during three years, I have given you on this head.—With these instructions I recommend you to the grace of God; which, with your own 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32.

25. The word *οὐδὲ* often signifies only *belief*.

28. This very remarkable expression, *the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*, I think cannot easily be evaded by those, who deny the divinity of Christ.

33. sincere endeavours, will perfect you in all holiness.—For myself,
 34. you will bear me witness, that I have not preached the gospel
 among you through any interested motives. You all know that
 35. these hands have ministered, not only to my own necessities; but
 to those of others: and thus also I have instructed my fellow-
 labourers; always remembering the words of our Lord, *that it is*
 36. *more blessed to give, than to receive.*—After Paul had made this
 37. 38. affectionate address, they all joined with him in prayer; and then
 accompanied him to the ship with many tears, and sorrowful
 embraces; grieving above all things, at his saying, they should
 see his face again no more.

C H A P.
XXI.

1. Having thus parted with the elders of the church of Ephesus,
 Paul, and his company embarked again; and holding their course
 along the islands of Cos, and Rhodes, they landed at Patara, on
 2. 3. the south of Asia Minor. Here they found a ship bound to Phe-
 4. nicia; in which they took their passage to Tyre.—At this city,
 they met with several disciples; who under the influence of the
 5. 6. Spirit, desired them not to go to Jerusalem. But Paul, persisting
 in his resolution, they followed him, with their wives, and children,
 a mournful company, to the shore; where, after prayer, Paul and
 7. his friends embarked; and continued their course to Ptolemais.—
 8. Here spending a day with the disciples of that place; they pro-
 ceeded to Cæsarea; where they lodged with Philip, one of the
 9. seven deacons. This holy man had four unmarried daughters;
 whom God had endowed with the spirit of prophecy.

35. These words of our blessed Saviour are not recorded by any of the evangelists; but as, without doubt, St. Paul had them on good authority, they must be considered as making a part of the evangelical history.—The giver is *supposed* here, to have *a good motive* in giving; on which the blessedness of giving depends.

7. Ptolemais took afterwards, in Turkish times, the name of Acra; and was the object of great contention during the holy wars. It is now, Maundrel tells us, a heap of ruins.

8. We are told Acts viii. 40, that Philip lived at Cæsarea.

While

While they continued here, the prophet Agabus came from Judea; and taking Paul's girdle, he tied it about his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Spirit of God; the Jews at Jerusalem shall in this manner treat the man, to whom this girdle belongeth; and shall deliver him to the Gentiles.—This gave both Paul's companions, and the disciples at Cæsarea great uneasiness. But notwithstanding all their intreaty, Paul held his resolution, saying, What mean you to weep, and to break mine heart. I am ready not only to be bound, but to die also for the sake of the gospel.—When they found it was in vain to persist, they submitted, saying, The will of the Lord be done!—Paul therefore set out for Jerusalem, accompanied by some of the disciples of Cæsarea; together with one Mnason, a Cyprian, who had a house at Jerusalem, where it was intended he should lodge.

On their arrival at Jerusalem he and his company were kindly received by the brethren, and the next day Paul went to James, and the rest of the apostles; and gave them a full account of his ministry among the Gentiles. On this they all glorified God.

On their part, they informed him of the state of the gospel at that time at Jerusalem—that it had increased exceedingly: but that the zealous Jews, who had embraced it, could not be induced to give up the necessity of observing the Mosaic law. They told him farther, that it was believed by all the Jewish christians at Jerusalem, that nobody had more opposed the retaining of the Jewish ceremonies among

10. The same who foretold the famine. Acts xi. 28.

15. Our *carriages*, should be translated our *baggage*. It is used in that sense in Xenophon's *anabasis*—Ἐπεὶ ἡρίστησαν συσκευασάμενοι ἐπορεύοντο. Oxf. edit. p. 344. The word frequently occurs in Xenophon.

21. This passage plainly shews, that one of the chief subjects of St. Paul's discourses to the Jews, was the insufficiency of the Mosaic law in obtaining salvation. This was the doctrine, which had chiefly irritated the Jews against him; and had induced the apostolical college to consult his safety by advising him to conform to the ceremonies of the Nazarite-vow.

22. 23. 24. among the Gentiles, than he had done. Something therefore, they thought, of a conciliatory nature was necessary. They proceeded to inform him, there was at that time, among them four persons, who were then under a Nazarite-vow, which was to expire in seven days; and proposed to Paul, that he himself should take the same vow upon him for the same term; and be at the expence of proper sacrifices, and shave his head; by which compliance, in an indifferent matter, he might convince the Jews, that their prejudices
 25. against him were ill-grounded. Nor could this at all affect the Gentiles, as the late decree at Jerusalem had made them entirely easy.
26. This advice Paul followed; and the next day, presented himself in the temple; signifying his intention, after the accomplishment of the seven days, to offer the sacrifices, which the law required.—

As the *inefficacy* of the Jewish law therefore, particularly of circumcision, and it's other rites, were so much the subjects of his preaching; we may conclude also they were equally the subjects of his writings; and that many passages in his epistles, which seem to speak of *faith* in opposition to *works*, must be explained by this key. St. Paul might have preached, as much as he had pleased, about *faith*, and *works*, as that doctrine is sometimes explained, and would have given no offence at all to the Jews. As therefore the apostle's doctrine about faith and works did give great offence to the Jews; we conclude it could not be a doctrine, which was no way calculated to offend them; but rather a doctrine, which we know, from the first, had always given them offence.

24. There is something very beautiful, and exemplary, in the behaviour of these great apostles on this occasion. No rigour appears in trifling matters; but a desire in all things lawful to accommodate themselves to the prejudices of others.—It is plain from this passage, among many of the same kind, that the apostles had no scruples of conscience in conforming to the Jewish rites. All they contended for, was, that they were not necessary to salvation.

24. It was reckoned among the Jews, very meritorious to contribute to the expences of those, who had taken a Nazarite vow. Josephus tells us, that Herod Agrippa gained great credit by paying the expences of Nazarites; and Maimonides asserts, that he who did it, partook of the merits of the vow.

25. The decree mentioned Acts xv.

26. It is not obvious why Paul should offer sacrifices; inasmuch as by respecting the type, he shewed disrespect to the archetype. All sacrifices, it is true, did not imply propitiation. But this evidently did. See Numb. vi. 14.

But

But before the seven days were compleated, some of the Asiatic Jews, who had persecuted him in their own country, seeing him now in the temple, excited the people with violent outcries, against him, as a man, who had prophaned the law, and polluted the temple, by bringing uncircumcised Greeks into it.—This last charge was founded on a groundless supposition, that he had carried Trophimus, an Ephesian, into the temple; whereas Paul, and he had only been seen together in the city. 27. 28.

At these outcries great numbers of people flocking together, were soon actuated by the spirit of their leaders. Paul was immediately assaulted, and dragged out of the temple; and the enraged multitude would have put him instantly to death, if the Roman officer, who commanded in the castle of Antonia, had not issued out with a guard, and rescued him. Lyfias, for that was the officer's name, having ordered Paul to be secured, demanded what they had to say against him? Not being able however to obtain any satisfactory answer from the confused clamours of the multitude, he commanded him to be carried up to the castle. But the croud was so violent, and daring, that the soldiers were scarce able to carry him up the the stairs. 29. 31. 32. 33.

In this situation Paul addressing himself to the Roman officer, desired to speak a few words to him. Lyfias surprized at his 34. 35. 36. 37.

32. Josephus describes this castle, as having four towers, from one of which it overlooked the temple; and was therefore a great check upon it: for the soldiers could descend by a flight of stairs, on any alarm, into the portico of the temple, with which the castle was connected.

33. *Bound with two chains.* A capital offender among the Romans, was secured by being fastened to two foldiers. See the same manner of securing mentioned Acts xii. 6. For small offences the prisoner was secured by a single foldier. See Acts xxviii. 16.

38. speaking the Greek language, asked him, If he was not that
 39. Egyptian, who, a few years before, had headed a band of four
 40. thousand ruffians? Paul assured him, he was not; but that he was
 a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia; and begged he might be permitted to
 speak to the people. The Roman officer giving him leave, Paul
 stood on the stairs of the castle; and having by waving his hand,
 obtained silence, addressed them in the Hebrew tongue, which still
 the more engaged their attention.

C H A P.
 XXII.
 1. 2.

3. He began his defence by assuring them he was a Jew; and tho
 a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, had been educated in Jerusalem,
 under their celebrated rabbi Gamaliel; by whom he had been fully
 instructed in the law, of which he had been as zealous a defender
 4. as any of them.—Nay, in the early part of his life, he had been
 the most determined adversary of that gospel, which he now pro-
 5. fessed—and to this the high-priest, and elders could bear witness,
 who had often employed him in persecuting christianity. He then
 laid before them the singular, and miraculous event of his con-
 version; and entering into the circumstances of it, related in order,
 his journey to Damascus—the divine vision, which had been vouch-
 6. 7. 8. 9.
 10. 11. 12.
 13. 14. 15.
 16. safed to him—the blindness, with which he had been struck—and
 his restoration to sight at Damascus—mentioning the name of the

38. Josephus gives the following account of this Egyptian—that he got together a tumultuary army; whom he persuaded, to believe, that he would miraculously take Jerusalem, as Jericho had formerly been taken. With this view he led them to the Mount of Olives. But here they were attacked, and defeated by Felix, the Roman governor; who killed, and took about six hundred of them; and put the rest to flight. Among the fugitives was the Egyptian himself, who not being afterwards heard of, was now supposed by Lyfias, to have made another attempt. Josephus gives an account of this Egyptian both in his Jewish war, and in his antiquities, with some variation of circumstances; which Lardner (Credib. Vol. I. p. 414) endeavours to reconcile; and makes both them and St. Luke accord.—Lyfias's conceiving Paul to be this Egyptian gives a strong idea of the tumult.

3. *At the feet of Gamaliel*, says the text. This is not figurative; but relates to the manner, in which scholars set under the desks of their masters.

person

person there, who was instrumental in this wonderful recovery.—
 He then told them that this was not the only miraculous call he
 had had. In Jerusalem he had a revelation from heaven; by
 which he was forbidden to stay any longer there, as the Jews
 would not receive his testimony. To this divine injunction he
 ventured to reply, that the Jews could not doubt the truth, and
 sincerity of his conversion, from his former severity to christians;
 and particularly in the case of Stephen; which would make him,
 he thought, a properer person, than any other, to convert those,
 who lived on the spot, and were acquainted with all these cir-
 cumstances.—But he was ordered by the heavenly voice to leave
 Jerusalem; and preach the gospel among the Gentiles—

17.

18.

19. 20.

21.

22. 23.

Thus far the people heard him patiently: but he had no sooner
 mentioned the Gentiles, than they broke out again into all the
 excesses of rage, and violence; throwing off their cloaths, casting
 dust into the air, and crying out, Away with him—Away with
 him: it is not fit, that such a fellow should live.

24.

25.

26.

27.

28.

The Roman officer, seeing the tumult renewed, and not being
 able to gather from a Hebrew-speech, what Paul had said, or done,
 to excite such violence, ordered him to be carried into the castle,
 and to be examined with scourging. But as the soldiers were
 binding him, Paul asked a centurion, who stood by, Whether it
 were lawful to scourge a Roman citizen, yet uncondemned?—The
 centurion mentioning this to his commander, that officer asked Paul,
 Whether the information he had received, were true, that he was

23. Throwing dust into the air, is still a mode of shewing contempt among the Arabians, particularly to criminals; as if they were fit only to be covered with earth.

28. Some learned critics have endeavoured to shew, that Tarsus never was among the Roman *municipia*. If so, Paul's *father* must have been a freedman, as many of the Jews were. But others say, Tarsus, which sided with the two first Cæsars, obtained municipal privileges from one of these emperors.—Dr. Lardner quotes a passage from Dio to shew, that the chief-captain might easily have purchased his freedom; for at this time the citizenship of Rome was become very cheap. Messalina had introduced the sale of it.

29. a Roman citizen? To this Paul answered in the affirmative. The officer still doubting his assertion, asked, in what manner he had obtained his freedom? It is not a matter, continued he, easily obtained: it cost me a considerable sum. But Paul informed him, that he was free-born.—This put an immediate stop to the summary way intended of examining Paul; and the Roman officer was not a little apprehensive, on having gone so far. He resolved therefore to have him examined in another manner; and the next day sent to inform the high-priest, and the council, that he would bring Paul down from the castle into the temple; where they might freely examine him; and set forth the ground of all this tumult.

CHAP.
XXIII.
1.

Paul being thus produced before them, looked round the council with some attention; that from a knowledge of the characters of the people, who composed it, he might be able to procure a party in his favour.—He then began with solemnly protesting, that, however traduced he had been as a mover of sedition, his opinions had always led him to a dutiful submission to law, and government——

2. The high-priest incensed at this vindication of himself, ordered those, who stood by, to strike him on the face: on which Paul, with some warmth, cried out, God shall smite you, for all your

29. It is said, he was afraid, *because he had bound him*—that is, because he had bound him in the ignominious manner, in which he had done, for scourging. A Roman citizen might be bound for security; and it appears from the 30th verse, that Paul was still in bonds.

1. *To a dutiful submission, &c.* As he had been accused of stirring up the people, this seems to be the most probable meaning of the passage.

3. The appellation of *whited wall* was probably in allusion to our Saviour's calling the hypocritical Pharisees, *whited sepulchres*: tho otherwise it was a very apposite appellative, as the high-priest, at least in exercising his functions, wore *a large white robe*.—This denunciation of God's wrath against this wicked high-priest, was fulfilled in the beginning of the Jewish war, about five years after. Josephus informs us, that in a tumult having hid himself in an old aqueduct, he was discovered, dragged out, and put to death. Bell. Jud. lib. II. c. 17.

hypocritical

hypocritical pretences. Do you sit here to judge me according to law, and command me to be smitten, contrary to law?

This speech gave great offence to some of the bye-standers; and Paul thought it right to apologize for the impropriety of his behaviour; saying, he had not attended sufficiently to what he said; for the word of God enjoined him not to speak disrespectfully of the ruler of the people.

4. 5.

This interruption being over, Paul began again; and having observed there were many Pharisees in the council, he said, he knew well, that it was not for being a mover of sedition, that he was called in question; but for holding the opinion of the resurrection of the dead, which as a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, he had always maintained.

6.

This immediately produced a division in the assembly, which consisted of Pharisees, and Sadducees; the latter of whom denied the existence of a future state. While these therefore thought Paul should be treated with every severity; the Pharisees declared, they saw no fault in him: but if an angel from heaven had spoken to him in that wonderful account he had given of his conversion, they should beware of doing any thing in opposition to God.—By degrees the dissention arose to such a height, that the Roman officer fearing, lest Paul might have been torn in pieces by the contending factions, ordered the guard immediately to carry him back to the castle.—That night the Lord favoured him with a heavenly vision, exhorting him not to sink under this persecution; and informing him, that he was appointed to bear witness of the truth at Rome, as he had already done at Jerusalem.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

5. Paul thought it right to apologize. *I will not*, seems to mean, *I did not consider*.—Or it may mean, he did not know him: for the high-priest might have been then in a common dress. He wore his pontifical robes only when he ministered in the temple; see Ezek. xliv. 19.

12. 13. The Jews now found that all their public measures against Paul, were ineffectual. Some of the more zealous of them therefore resolved on other means. About forty of these zealots binding themselves privately by an oath, that they would neither eat, nor drink, till they had destroyed him, went to the chief priests; and informing them of their conspiracy, desired them to request the commanding officer to bring down Paul again, the next day, to be examined. In the mean time they would seize the opportunity, as he came out of the castle, to fall upon him, and put him to death.

16. This conspiracy was discovered by a young man, a kinsman of Paul's; who procuring admittance into the castle, opened the whole affair to the apostle. On this Paul, calling a centurion, desired him to carry that young man to his commanding officer; to whom he had a secret to impart.—Lyfias taking the young man aside, heard all the particulars of the affair; and dismissed him with a charge of secrecy. He then called two centurions, and ordered them to have a body of horse, and foot, ready to march to Cæsarea, at nine that evening; and to provide beasts, to carry the prisoner Paul to Felix the proconsul; to whom he wrote the following letter.

26. “ Claudius Lyfias to the most excellent governor Felix, greet-
 27. ing.—The person presented to you with this letter, is a Roman citizen; who having been the occasion of a great tumult at Jerusalem; in which he was in danger of his life, was rescued by me, and conveyed to this castle. As I wished to know what was objected to him, I brought him before the high-priest, and his council: but it appears to me, that the chief offence he has given, is with regard to certain *religious opinions*, which he holds: for nothing of a *criminal nature* has been laid to his charge. Finding however, that the offence, of whatever kind, was likely to occasion

sion great disturbance here, I thought it right to remit the case to you; ordering the accusing party also to attend. Farewell."

The centurion, receiving the letter, carried Paul that night to Antipatris; and the next day the foot returning, the horsemen conducted him to Cæsarea; where they delivered the letter into the hands of Felix, the proconsul; and at the same time presented Paul.—Felix having read the letter, asked to what province the prisoner belonged? And being informed, that he was a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia; he ordered him into confinement, till his accusers should arrive.

In less than a week the high-priest Ananias, and many of the council, with an eloquent man, one Tertullus, whom they employed, arrived at Cæsarea, as Paul's accusers; and the proconsul appointed a day of hearing.

Tertullus began his accusation of Paul by paying the proconsul many compliments on the great happiness, which the Jewish nation had long enjoyed under his government.—He then gave a brief account of the cause he had in hand; informing the proconsul, that the prisoner, who was a violent man, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, had been at the head of many seditions among the Jews, in different parts of the empire—and that at Jerusalem, he had been guilty of an attempt to profane the temple—that they had had no intention of troubling the proconsul about this matter; but meant to have punished the prisoner agreeably to their own law; had not the tribune Lyfias, taken him violently out of their hands; and referred the matter to the proconsul's tribunal.—This charge

3. These compliments were paid much at the expence of truth; for Josephus, and Tacitus both inform us, how very corrupt a governor Felix was.

6. As the Jews could not put a criminal to death, tho they were impowered to inflict slighter punishments, the real meaning of what Tertullus said, was, that they intended to have put him to death in a tumultuary manner, without any process of law at all.

was supported by the high-priest, and his council; who all bore witness of the truth of what had been alledged.

10. The proconsul then giving Paul liberty to defend himself, he first expressed his satisfaction, that he had a cause to defend, before a judge, who had been for many years, acquainted with the laws, and customs of the Jews—he then, in answer to the charge against him, gave a short account of his whole conduct. He said, that about twelve days ago he went up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of pentecost—but that he had neither disputed in the temple, nor in the synagogue, nor in the city—nor had taken any one step, which had the least tendency to raise a sedition—that in short, the whole charge against him was unsupported—and he might challenge them to prove any single *particular* of it.—With regard to his being a *ringleader of the Nazarenes*, he said, he owned himself a christian; and tho the Jews might call christianity by the name of heresy, it was certainly the completion of their own law, and prophets; and held out the great articles of a resurrection from the dead, and a state of rewards and punishments, which the generality of themselves allowed. In a word, he said, it was on the ground of this very persuasion, that he persevered, both in the performance of his duty to God; and in an inoffensive behaviour to man.—As to their last charge of his *prophaning the temple*, he ran over the particulars of his coming to Jerusalem, to bring alms to the poor christians
17. 18.

14. Dr. Lardner lays great stress on the expression, *so worship I the God of my fathers*, as making the chief point of Paul's defence. I shall lay the substance of what he says before the reader.

“ By the Roman laws, no man might introduce or worship foreign Gods, not allowed by public authority. Yet christians were protected by law, because they worshipped the God of heaven and earth—the God, whom the Jews worshipped; and whose worship was every where established. St. Paul's reasoning therefore was this. They call christianity a new sect. Be it so: but in this way I worship the same God, which they do; and therefore am intitled to protection equally with them.” Credib. p. I. b. I. ch. viii.

there

there—of his purifying himself peaceably in the temple—and of the violent attack that had been made upon him by the Asiatic Jews; whose not appearing against him, he thought, was ground sufficient to reject this charge. Of these transactions, he said, the high-priest, and council of the Jews, who were *not present*, could be *no witnesses*. They could be witnesses only of what had passed in their own assembly; where, he believed, nothing offensive could be produced against him; but his asserting the doctrine, he had just mentioned, of the resurrection of the dead.

Felix having thus heard the accusation, and defence; and knowing enough of the christian religion to be well assured, there was nothing in its principles of seditious tendency, saw plainly how frivolous the accusation was, and did not chuse to pass sentence against Paul. On the other hand, being unwilling to displease the Jewish council, he did not care to dismiss him. He therefore took a middle course, and told the Jews, he should decide nothing in this affair, till the arrival of Lysias, the tribune; whom he would examine with regard to the several circumstances, which had been alledged.—In the mean time, he gave Paul into the custody of a centurion, with orders to let him have his full liberty of going any where, and of seeing whom he pleased.

After this, Felix, for some time, left Cæsarea. On his return he brought with him a Jewish lady, whose name was Drusilla; and whether through her curiosity, or his own, or some other motive, he sent for Paul, and desired to hear his account of the christian faith. As Felix had been a great oppressor, and had now

21. As Paul's asserting the resurrection of the dead had actually produced a tumult, (see chap. xxiii. 9, 10.) it is probable, he might mention it now, in his defence, as the only circumstance, which could give colour to his being a raiser of sedition; tho it was clearly such a circumstance, as no judge could turn into crime.

25. The fact about Drusilla is mentioned by Josephus. Hist. lib. XX.

been guilty of a very flagrant action in seducing Drusilla from her husband, Paul took this opportunity to awaken his conscience, by explaining the virtues of *justice*, and *temperance*; and enforcing what he said by the *terrors of a future judgment*. His discourse made such an impression on Felix, that he was thrown into great agitation by it; and abruptly dismissing the apostle, told him, he should hear him farther at a time of more leisure.—The impression however soon went off; and the mind of Felix, (as is usual in such cases) returned to it's former habits. He sent however frequently for Paul, after this—not to hear him discourse any more on religious subjects; but with a view to extort money from him for his release; and in this suspense he held him two years.—About the end of that time, Portius Festus was appointed proconsul, in the room of Felix; and Felix, with a view to ingratiate himself with the Jews, left Paul still in custody.

CHAP.
XXV.

1. 2. 3. 4.

5.

6. 7. 8.

In a few days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went to Jerusalem; where, among the first articles of business, he was informed by the high-priest, of the case of Paul; and was intreated to send for him to Jerusalem; and examine him there. But whether Festus had any intimation of their intending to lay in wait for him (which in fact they did intend) or he had some other reason, he shewed at first no inclination to indulge them; but let them know, he should examine him at Cæsarea, where he himself was then going; and that the accusers of Paul might follow him thither.

Accordingly in about ten days, he went to Cæsarea, when Paul was brought before him—and the chief priests attended. The

26. Felix knew the christians to be a numerous and very charitable body; and that it was common with them to raise contributions for the assistance of their brethren.

27. How much reason he had to ingratiate himself with them is very evident: for he was accused with great vehemence of mal-administration, when he left his province; and had certainly been ruined, if great interest with Nero had not interposed. See this proved by quotations in Lardner's Credib. part I. book I. chap. i.

accusation

accusation contained little more ; and of course the defence, than in the former trial.

But by this time, a better understanding had commenced between the chief priests, and their new governor ; and Festus found it his interest to gratify the Jews with a new trial in their own courts at Jerusale[m]. However, as Paul was a Roman citizen, this could not legally be done without his own consent.—Paul availed himself of his privilege ; and knowing the inveteracy of his enemies, he rejected the idea of a Jewish court ; and refused to be tried by any laws ; but those of the empire. At the same time, considering the harsh treatment he had already met with at Cæsarea ; where he had been in custody two years, for no offence ; he stood upon his innocence, and appealed from a provincial tribunal, to that of Cæsar ; and Festus, having advised with his officers, allowed the appeal.

Soon after this, Herod Agrippa, tetrarch of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea in compliment to Festus, on his arrival in the province ; and Paul's cause becoming the subject

13. This Agrippa, son of that Herod Agrippa, who had put James to death, was king of Chalcis ; a small district lying, as is supposed, between Libanus, and Antilibanus. The keeping of the temple of Jerusale[m], with the holy garments, and the treasure, was committed to him by the emperor. In other respects he had little concern in Judea, which was under a Roman governor.—Bernice, his sister, is suspected to have lived criminally with her brother. Juvenal is supposed to allude to them in his sixth satyr, where speaking of a rich diamond belonging to Bernice, he says,

—————hunc dedit olim

Barbarus incestæ, dedit hunc Agrippa forori.

This lady, who seems to have been the Cleopatra of those times, had once almost drawn aside the celebrated Titus ; but that youthful conqueror at length subdued his passion. “ Fuere qui accensum desiderio Berenices reginæ crederent. Neque abhorrebat a Berenice juvenilis animus : sed gerendis rebus nullum ex eo impedimentum.” Tacit. hist. l. II. c. 3. See likewise Suetonius in Tit. c. 7.

15. 16. 17. of conversation between them, Festus mentioned what had been done in it—the circumstances of the trial—and the frivolous accusation brought against him. He had supposed, he said, the Jewish priests would have laid some civil crime to his charge: 18. but instead of that, he had been accused chiefly of holding a few superstitious opinions; particularly about one Jesus, who had been 19. executed, and whom Paul affirmed to be still alive. As these were points, Festus said, about which he had no knowledge himself, and which he thought could only be decided properly in a Jewish court, he had wished to have the affair heard at Jerusalem. 21. But as the prisoner, who was a Roman citizen, had appealed to 22. Cæsar, he had determined to send him to Rome.—On this, Agrippa expressed a desire to hear the account which Paul had to give of himself: and Festus accordingly promised, that he should hear him the next day.

23. The next day therefore Paul was sent for to attend Festus, who was accompanied by Agrippa, Bernice, and their principal officers. 24. 25. The proconsul opened the business by saying, that as the prisoner, who had made himself so offensive to the Jews, had done nothing worthy of death, and had appealed to Cæsar, he had determined 26. to send him to Rome: but as there appeared a very frivolous charge against him, he was glad of the opportunity of this hearing before Agrippa, as it might furnish him with some better account of the affair, than he had yet had: for there was something very improper, he thought, in sending a prisoner, and not 27. signifying, at the same time, the particulars of his crime.

C H A P.
XXVI.

1. 2.

3. Festus having thus opened the affair, Agrippa bad Paul make his defence: on which Paul raising his hand, thus spoke.—I think it is a great happiness, king Agrippa, that I am allowed to answer for myself, this day before you; whom I well know to be informed in all the doctrines, and customs of the Jews. I beseech

beseech you therefore to hear me patiently.—My manner of life, 4. 5.
 from my earliest youth, is very well known to the Jews, if they
 would bear witness to it; and the principles also, which I then
 professed. No man was a stricter Pharisee; nor more versed in
 the doctrines of that sect. No man trusted more in those gracious 6. 7.
 promises, made to our fathers, which are confessedly the great
 end of the mosaic law; and the great foundation of the hope of
 every serious Jew. And yet I stand here accused for believing,
 that God hath fulfilled those promises, and those hopes by raising
 Jesus Christ from the dead. No man can on reasonable grounds, 8.
 suppose it to be an incredible thing that God should raise the 9. 10. 11.
 dead.—For myself, it cannot be imagined I embraced christianity
 on a slight evidence, when I had entered so deeply, and so con-
 scientiously into an opposition to it; having been long the instru-
 ment of severity in extirpating it, both in Judea, and other
 places.—But my conversion had a still stronger ground-work, 12.
 than human evidence. It was the immediate work of God.—
 Paul then gave a summary account of his conversion; and parti- 13. 14. 15.
 cularly of the injunctions, which the heavenly vision had laid upon 16. 17. 18.
 him, to be a minister, and an apostle of christianity; to open the eyes
 of the blind; and to draw men to the acknowledgment of the truth—
 that through faith, and repentance they might inherit everlasting life.
 —This heavenly vision, king Agrippa, continued the apostle, I have 19.
 ever since obeyed; and have, every where, both in Judea, and among 20.
 the Gentiles, preached merely the inoffensive doctrines of faith, and
 repentance, which are also the great tenets of the christian reli-

4. St. Paul is supposed by Bp. Lowth, in his commentary on 1st. liii. 8. to allude to a Jewish custom, which had been denied him. See a note on John xviii. 21. where the same custom is supposed to be alluded to.

8. The apostle might allude to the Jewish history, or the history of Christ, for instances of God's power to raise the dead: or, he might mean, that it was as easy for Almighty Power to raise a dead body, as to create a living one.

21. gion. This is the only ground of enmity, which the Jews can
 22. alledge against me.—Through God's help also I have hitherto
 been enabled to testify, what is at the same time, intirely agreeable
 to Moses, and the prophets—that Christ should suffer, and rise
 23. from the dead; and be the great author of salvation to all man-
 kind, Gentiles, as well as Jews.

24. As Paul was thus speaking, Festus, who thought these doc-
 trines strange, and inconceivable, called out, with a loud voice,
 Paul thou art beside thyself. Thy learning makes thee mad.

25. 26. Paul denied the charge; and then turning to Agrippa, appealed
 to him for the facts, which he had related. He could not, the
 apostle told him, be ignorant of these things; for they were all
 27. very public transactions; nor could he, as he was so nearly con-
 nected with the Jews, be ignorant of the tendency of the prophetic
 writings. And he boldly put the question to him; whether he
 28. did not believe the prophets? Agrippa freely confessed that his
 29. words had made some impression on him: to which Paul an-
 swered, that he wished to God, the truth might have it's full
 effect, not only on him; but on all, who had heard him that
 day; and that they might embrace it from conviction, as he had
 done; tho without suffering, as he had, in it's defence.

30. 31. Paul having ended his speech, Agrippa, and Festus conferring
 together, concluded, that he had done nothing, that deserved even
 32. imprisonment; and Agrippa said, he might certainly have been
 discharged, if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

28. Some commentators suppose, that Agrippa's speech, *almost thou persuadest me to be a christian*, was spoken in derision. But it seems more probable, that it was a ray of conviction, which just broke in upon him. Like Felix however he received no lasting impression; for we have no account, that he ever became a christian.

As

As it was determined therefore that Paul should be sent to Italy, he was delivered, together with a christian of Thessalonica, whose name was Aristarchus, and some other prisoners, into the hands of Julius, a centurion of Augustus's legion; and carried on board a Mysian vessel, which was engaged in a trading voyage, along the coast of Asia.

The first port they entered, was Sidon, where Julius, with great civility, gave Paul leave to go on shore, and visit his friends.

3.

—From thence they stood to the north, intending to touch at some of the ports of Asia: but a contrary wind carried them along the coast of Cyprus; and they were not able to reach any Asiatic port, till they arrived at Myra in Lycia.—Here Julius found an Alexandrian vessel bound to Italy; and embarked on board it, together with the prisoners under his charge.

4. 5.

6.

From this harbour their voyage was greatly interrupted by contrary winds; and it was several days before they were able to reach the eastern end of Crete; which they passed, with difficulty; and took shelter in a bay, called the Fair-haven, not far from the town of Laccæa.—As it was now late however in the year, just after the fast of the atonement, when the stormy season generally sets in, Paul advised the centurion to winter where he was; as there would pro-

7.

8.

9. 10.

2. It does not certainly appear that Aristarchus was a prisoner; nor indeed for what purpose he is named. These little particularities however add great value to the truth of a relation; and are strong marks of it's authenticity.

3. From the first person plural, used often in the description of this voyage; it appears that Luke still accompanied Paul.

6. Mr. Bryant, in his dissertation on the wind Euroclydon, has given us a very satisfactory account of the Alexandrine trade to Italy, which consisted chiefly in corn. See p. 17.

9. This fast is kept at the end of September, about the time of the equinoctial winds. See Levit. xxiii. 27 and xvi. 29. Num. xxix. 7. Jos. Antiq. III. 10. 3.

10. Paul no doubt often spoke as a mere man. Here perhaps from some signs in the heavens, he forefaw a storm. Many interpreters however suppose him under the influence of inspiration. Either sense may be admitted.

11. 12. bably be great danger in putting to sea. But the centurion listened rather to the master of the ship, and others, who advised him to leave the haven, as incommodious to winter in; and to endeavour to reach Phenice. This was a Cretan harbour likewise; and a much safer road; being totally land-locked by a small island; except in the two different directions through which it is entered between
13. the two points of the island, and the Cretan coast.—Taking the advantage therefore of a gentle breeze from the south, they set sail, coasting along the shores of Crete, in hopes of reaching Phenice
14. without difficulty. But a violent storm arose from the north-east,
15. and the ship becoming unmanageable, the seamen were obliged
16. 17. to let her drive.—At the south-west end of Crete lies a small island, named Claudia. Under the shelter of this land, they got up the boat with great difficulty; and passing a cable round the ship, drew in all the sails; and were obliged to resign themselves to the mercy of the winds. They were chiefly afraid of the quicksands,
18. towards which the tempest drove them.—The next day the storm
19. increasing, they threw out a quantity of the lading; and the day after they were obliged to cut away a part of the masts, and rigging.
20. In this condition being tossed about many days in a raging sea; and seeing neither sun nor stars to direct their course, either by day, or night, they gave up all hopes of being saved.

15. The expression in the original is very animated: *πλοιοι μη δυναμενοι αυτοφθαλμειν τω ανεμω*: *the ship could no longer look the storm in the face.*

17. This practice, which is here called, *undergirding the ship*, is in use at this day. In Lord Anfon's voyage the captain of a Spanish ship, we are told, was obliged, in a storm, to *take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening.*

17. These are generally supposed to have been the African quick-sands, where, Virgil tells us, Æneas suffered the loss of three of his ships.

———Tres Euris ab alto

In brevia, et fyrtes urget——

19. What is particularly meant by throwing out *the tackling of the ship*, is not easy to say. It is plain from ver. 40, that *all* their masts were not cut away.

Paul

Paul however, after they had undergone much fatigue, reminding the seamen of the loss they had already suffered through the neglect of his advice at Crete, bad them still be of comfort; for he was assured they should all yet be saved. This night, said he, the angel of that God, whom I serve, appeared unto me; and informed me, I must be carried to Rome. From this vision I know we shall be cast on an island: but no lives shall be lost. Trust therefore in this assurance from God.

The ship having now been driven about during fourteen days, and the storm still continuing, at midnight, the seamen conjectured they drew near land, as they found only twenty fathom of water; and soon after only fifteen. They threw out four anchors therefore from the stern; and wished for the morning. Some of them however not liking their situation in the ship; and chusing rather to trust themselves to the boat, began to let her down, under a pretence of fixing other anchors at the prow.—Paul observing this, told the centurion, that he must not suffer them to leave the ship. It was not God's intention, he said, to save them by a miracle; but through the means of their own strenuous endeavours. The soldiers, on this, cut the ropes; and let the boat drop into the sea.

As the day was coming on, Paul, who had now gained a great ascendancy in the ship, called the crew together, and as they had

27. This sea is called Adria; but it is generally supposed, that the Mediterranean, and not the Adriatic, is meant. See Wells's geog. of the New Testament. See also Bochart. Strabo, and other ancient geographers certainly give great latitude to the Mediterranean: and an old scholiast upon Dionysius's *Periegesis*, says Το Σικελικον τετο το πειλαγος Αδριαν καλεουσι. They call the Sicilian sea, Adria. See Bp. Pearce's com.

33. This passage is very ill translated in our testament. The words, in the original, *τεσσαρεκκαιδεκατην σημειρον ημεραν προσδοκωντε, ασιτοι διατελεντε μηδεν προλαβομενοι*, may thus be literally translated; *All this fourteenth day have you waited, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.* The day before is meant; as the day and night made the Jewish day.

34. eaten little, or nothing the day before, he advised them to take
 some refreshment; assuring them again, that not one of them should
 35. perish.—He then called for food; and giving thanks, he distributed
 36. it among them. The apostle's behaviour occasioned a general cheer-
 fulness, and alacrity among all that were on board.

37. 38. 39. Their first business was to lighten the ship, by throwing out
 40. 41. 42. the remaining part of the wheat, with which she was laden.—
 43. 44. As day came on, the land appeared; but what land, they knew
 not. Observing however a creek, they determined, if possible,
 to run the ship into it. Taking up the anchors therefore, and
 hoisting a sail, they loosed the helm, and ran directly for the
 shore.

Between them, and the coast lay a bank, or shelf, formed by
 two opposite currents. On this shelf the ship ran aground; and
 the fore part being immoveably fixed; the stern was beaten in
 pieces by the violence of the waves. In this exigence the soldiers
 advised to put the prisoners to death, lest any of them should
 escape. But the centurion, through his particular regard for Paul,
 prevented them; and all had liberty to endeavour to save them-
 selves. They who could swim, leaped first into the sea; and the
 rest got on rafts, or broken pieces of the ship: so that, in the end,
 every person on board, tho the company consisted of two hundred
 and seventy-six people, got safe to shore.

C H A P.
XXVIII.

1. 2.

As soon as they landed they found the island was called Malta;
 the inhabitants of which, tho a barbarous people, administered
 to their wants, and shewed them every kindness in their power.

Soon

1. Mr. Bryant has endeavoured to shew, that Paul was not shipwrecked on the island of Malta, but on another island of the same name in the Adriatic. I admire his learning; but cannot easily accede to his conclusion.

Soon after their landing, it happened, that as Paul was taking up a bundle of wood for the fire, a viper, which was concealed in it, fastened upon his hand. The people, who stood around him, observing it, concluded immediately, that he was some very wicked person, whom the vengeance of heaven still pursued, tho

In the first place, there are very good authorities, particularly that of the Alexandrine MS, for reading *Ευρακυλων*, for *Ευροκλυδων*. If so, the ship was *driven* by a north-east wind; in which situation she could scarce possibly enter the gulf of the Adriatic; but would be very naturally driven-towards Malta.

Secondly, another ship is mentioned, (xxviii. 11) as driven out of it's course in the same direction, and to the same place, as that in which St. Paul was driven. To suppose two ships driven so exceedingly out of their course, is perhaps supposing too much.

Thirdly, the manners of the people, as described by St. Luke, agree much better with the inhabitants of Malta, than with those of the Adriatic isle. The inhabitants of the latter, according to Mr. Bryant's own account, were the most lawless people upon earth. They lived by piracy; and for their crimes had been almost extirpated by the Romans. It is true, St. Paul calls the inhabitants of the island where he landed, a *barbarous people*: but it may easily be supposed he called them so merely in conformity to the Greeks and Romans, who styled all people *barbarians*, who spoke a language different from their own. Thus Paul himself in another place, says, (1 Cor. xiv. 11) *If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh, shall be a barbarian unto me.* Certain it is, that by whatever name he called them, he meant to express no barbarity in their manners; as one should naturally expect in a nest of proscribed pirates. They shewed the apostle, and his company great kindness from the very moment of their landing. The country was civilized enough to afford lodgings for two hundred and seventy-six people; and when all this company departed, they were not only *loaded with such things as were necessary*; but presented with many gifts. There seems also to have been a Roman governor in the island, as one should judge from his name, and the manner in which he is introduced.

Fourthly, after the winter was over, we are told, that when Paul, and his company embarked again, they touched first at Syracuse in Sicily; from whence they went to Rhegium. This was exactly their right course from Malta; but somewhat out of it, if they came from the Adriatic isle. In that case, they must have touched first at Rhegium, and then at Syracuse; if they had any business at Syracuse at all.

Lastly, a tradition yet exists at Malta of St. Paul's landing there. On the north-east coast a place is shewn, bearing the name of *La cala di S. Paolo*: and here (as a captain of an English ship, who had been there, assured me) a place may be seen, *where two seas meet*.

The island of Malta takes it's name from the quantity of honey it produces.

6. he was suffered to escape the storm. But when they saw him
shake the viper into the fire; and instead of swelling, and falling
down dead, as they expected, appear not to be in the least injured,
7. they changed their minds, and thought him a God.

Near the place, where the ship went on shore, the principal
person of the island, whose name was Publius, resided; who
8. sending for Paul, and his company, kindly entertained them at
his house, till they could get lodgings provided.—Soon after,
Paul hearing that Publius's father was seized with a fever, and
9. dysentery, went to him, and by his prayers restored him to health.
—This brought many of the island, who had diseases, to Paul;
10. 11. all of whom he healed.

They had now been three months in Malta; during which time
they had received many tokens of kindness from the friendly islanders:
but the winter being now past, Julius began to think of continuing
12. his voyage to Rome. He hired an Alexandrian vessel therefore,
13. which had wintered in the isle, whose name was Castor and Pollux,
in which he set sail; and landed first at Syracuse, where the ship
continued three days.—From thence coasting the eastern side
of Sicily the vessel anchored in the bay of Rhegium: and the next day

6. Some late travellers have asserted, that in the island of Malta there are no venomous creatures. It is rather, I think, asserting too boldly a point so difficult to be ascertained. But on a supposition there are none *now*, it is no more a proof, that there never were any, than it is a proof, that there never were any wolves in England, because there are none at this time.

11. Called so probably from the images of Castor and Pollux on her prow; as was usual among the ancients:

————aurato fulgebat Apolline puppis.

Æn. X.

13. The Greek word is *πρὸς ὅρους*; which is translated, *fetched a compass*; but it is fetching no compass to sail along the coast of Sicily from Syracuse to Rhegium. The meaning therefore must either be, that they *failed along the coast*; which the word may express: or, if it be translated, *fetched a compass*, it must mean, that they were obliged to make several *tacks*, as the seamen call them, before they could reach Rhegium.

obtain-

obtaining a favourable breeze from the south, passed the straits, and soon arrived at Puteoli. Here Paul found several christians; and at their earnest desire, staid a week with them; and then set out for Rome.—His approach being known, several christians came out of the city to meet him, some as far as the three Taverns; and others as far as the Appii forum. Paul thanked God for his goodness; and took new courage, on finding that the christian religion was so openly professed at Rome, that it's converts durst shew their regard to a persecuted apostle.

On their arrival at Rome, Julius delivered the prisoners to the præfect of the prætorian cohorts: but representing Paul's case favourably, the apostle was permitted to dwell by himself, with a single soldier to guard him.

There were, at this time, among the regular inhabitants of Rome, many Jews, who had settled there on various occasions. Paul therefore, within a day or two after his arrival, sent a message to the principal of them, intreating them to come to him at his lodging. When they were assembled, he told them, that as his case was a peculiar one, he had sent for them to give them the particulars of it.—He then informed them of the circumstances

14. This shews how much the apostle was favoured by the centurion.

15. It is remarkable, that Tully also mentions *these two places together*, in one of his letters to Atticus (II. 10). He is speaking of two notes which he had written to him, as he left Rome. He wrote one, he says, ab Appii foro horâ quartâ: dederam aliam, paulo ante, in tribus Tabernis. The former of these places was about fifty miles from Rome, the latter about thirty.

16. The præfect of the prætorian cohorts, at this time, was Burrhus, an officer of great worth; who, with Seneca, endeavoured to check the early improprieties, and absurdities of Nero.—Paul's confinement was the most easy the Roman law allowed. According to the Roman custom, a chain of a convenient length was fastened round the right arm of the prisoner, and round the left of the soldier. We need not however suppose, that this chain was always fastened: but only when he went abroad.

of his trial; and the reasons, which had induced him to make that appeal, which had brought him to Rome—he did not mean, he said, to accuse his countrymen; but to defend himself—assuring them, at the same time, that nothing had been laid to his charge at Jerusalem; but the propagation of that gospel, to which all the prophets pointed.

21. When he had done speaking, the Jews assured him, they had heard nothing to his disadvantage from any of their brethren in
22. Judæa: only this they knew, that the christian religion was every where opposed; and therefore they desired to know from him what could be said for it.

23. Accordingly a day was appointed, and a numerous assembly of Jews coming to his lodgings, he expounded the gospel to them, and shewed them how exactly it had fulfilled the predictions of
24. 25. 26. Moses, and the prophets.—What he said, had it's effect on
27. many. But others paid no attention to his discourse. These he reminded of the prophet Isaiah's severe description of persons in their situation, who purposely excluded themselves from the
28. truth.—He then opened to them the intention of God in offering to the Gentiles the blessings of the gospel, which they
29. would accept, tho the Jews had rejected them.—It appeared however, that the Jews had violent disputes among themselves about these things.

30. 31. After this, Paul continued two years at Rome, in his own house; which he turned into a kind of school of religion; where

25. See Isa. vi. 9.

30. The case of Paul, as a minister of the gospel, was now much improved, by his appeal. While he was prisoner in Judea, it does not appear, that he exercised any apostolical functions. Now, he received all who came to him—made converts—wrote epistles to distant churches—sent out fellow-labourers; and in short, exercised all the apostolic duties, except that of visit-
ing

where he preached the gospel without the least molestation from any one.

ing in person. We have no reason therefore to regret the apostle's appeal to Cæsar. It was a prudent measure on his part, as he could not otherwise have avoided the malicious persecution of the Jews : and it discovers the over-ruling providence of God, in the various happy events, which were occasioned by it.

END OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

GENERAL PREFACE

T O

S T. P A U L's E P I S T L E S.

WE have seen the particulars of the life of our blessed Saviour recorded in the writings of the four evangelists; and have seen also, in the Acts of the apostles, the manner, in which the christian religion was first propagated among the heathen nations. We come now to the epistles, or those letters, which the apostles wrote to the several churches they had established; either to confirm their faith; or to remove the errors, which had been introduced among them.

Most of these epistles were written by St. Paul; whose writings are commonly esteemed among the most difficult parts of scripture. Tho he is considered as a close reasoner by those*, who are themselves the greatest masters of reasoning; yet it often requires more than ordinary attention, to follow his argument.

One source of obscurity is the quickness of his ideas. They crowd upon him. One thought often starts another, which does not directly follow it in place; but being necessary for the support of some point, arising from the subject, tho not leading immediately to it, requires that we should watch the writer's return to his principal point, with some attention.

The undetermined use of the pronouns *I* and *we*, is thought also by learned men to occasion obscurity in St. Paul's writings. Sometimes the apostle speaks in his own person: sometimes as a Jew: sometimes as a Gentile: sometimes as an infidel; and sometimes as a believer.

But the chief obscurity in St. Paul's writings, arises from the subject. The other epistles, which are called *catholic*, are commonly written on *general* topics of religion. The epistles of St. Paul are of a different construction. They are principally intended to oppose such antichristian

* See Mr. Lock, on St. Paul's epistles.

tenets, as were getting ground in the apostle's time. Many parts indeed of these epistles are direct answers to questions, or to the particular statement of cases, which had been put to the apostle: and the obscurity arises from our having only the answer before us; but neither the question, nor the state of the case.

P R E F A C E

T O

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE most obstinate controversy, in the early age of the christian church, was that, which was raised by the Jewish christians in behalf of the law of Moses; which the more zealous among them contended was necessary to justification. This controversy was carried on with great acrimony both at Rome, and in other places, where christian converts consisted of Jews, and Gentiles. Nor need we wonder at the great ascendancy of the Jewish christians over the Gentiles, when we consider, that Jesus was himself a Jew—that his life had been spent in Judea—that his personal application had been made solely to the Jews—and that the Jewish scriptures afforded one of the strongest proofs of christianity. When therefore, after our Saviour's death, the completion of those grand prophecies with regard to the *rejection of the Jews*; the *call of the Gentiles* and the *total abrogation of the Mosaic economy*, was taking place, the bulk of the Jewish nation was highly offended. This revolution indeed was so mortifying to them, that even many, who had seriously embraced the christian religion, could not easily lay aside their prejudices on this head. Their pride in being God's favorite people—their contempt of the Gentiles—their belief of inheriting the promises of God, as Abraham's children—their attachment to the temple-worship—to circumcision, and the other ceremonies

ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as necessary to justification—and their throwing scruples, and difficulties in the way of the Gentile converts—were opinions, and practices, which the apostles thought it highly necessary at all times to oppose.

These are the chief subjects of the following epistle to the Romans; in which St. Paul gives the new converts at Rome, both Jews, and Gentiles, just notions of the religion they had received. He tells them, that the ceremonies of the Jewish law were now fulfilled, and abolished—that altho many *individuals* among the Jews might embrace the gospel—yet as a *people* they were rejected—that, with regard to religious privileges, no *one* nation was now more favoured by God than *another*—and that the Gentiles, according to the predictions of the prophets, were called, together with the Jews, to partake equally of the benefits of the gospel; and on faith, and repentance to be equal inheritors with them of everlasting life.

But tho *this controversy* with the Jews concerns the christians of *these times* very little; yet *other controversies* for want of attending to the scope of the apostle's argument, have been ingrafted upon it, which import them much—controversies particularly about *predestination*, and *faith*.

The controversy about *predestination* probably did not arise in the church, till that early one with regard to the *Jews and Gentiles*, on which it is founded, had been forgotten. The scope, and connection of St. Paul's warm, and figurative expressions with regard to *vessels of mercy*, and *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction*, not being sufficiently attended to, the *primary* meaning of them was lost with a large party of christians; and instead of being explained as *terms* expressing the general *faith*, and *penitence* of one nation; and the general *hardened infidelity* of another, they were made to express the *salvation of one man*, and the *damnation of another*—not according to the gospel-terms of faith, and repentance; but by the absolute decrees of God. Whereas, in fact, the apostle seems not to have the least allusion to *particular persons*.

From the same discourses mistakes again have arisen with regard to *faith*, and *works*. The apostle's argument seems chiefly addressed to the Jews, who conceived the Mosaic ceremonies, or the works of the law, to be necessary to salvation, tho we find no traces among them of any controversy about other works. It is most probable therefore, that the
apostle

apostle writing to the Jewish christians, treats a subject, which we know was so much agitated among them; and that when he speaks of *justification by faith*, he means, in general, *justification by the gospel*, which we accept through *faith*: and when he speaks of *works*, his argument most frequently requires him to mean the *ceremonies, and observances of the Mosaic law*.*.—I speak in general, for he sometimes, no doubt, treats of that great gospel-doctrine, the insufficiency of all moral works to procure God's favour, without the merits of Christ.

In this epistle the apostle, after his introduction, expresses his joy at the steadiness of his new converts; and intimates his intention of going to Rome. 401—shews the necessity of the gospel dispensation; first to the heathen world; and secondly to the Jews. 402—answers an objection, with regard to the utility of the Jewish law. 403—resumes his argument. 404—General idea of christianity. 404—The case of Abraham considered. 405—applied to the Jewish law. 405—nature of Abraham's faith. 406—applied to christians. 406—Love of God shewn in the christian dispensation. 407—universality of Christ's atonement. 407—holiness of life the great end of christianity. 408—salvation through Christ as necessary to the Jew as to the Gentile. 409—blessedness of the gospel. 410—particularly in our afflictions. 412—The apostle bemoans the state of the Jewish nation. 413—vindicates the judgments of God. 413—shews that his treatment both of the Jews, and the Gentiles is agreeable to the predictions of the prophets. 415—and that Moses himself pointed out God's intention of superseding the law by the gospel. 416—the gospel ought of course therefore to be preached to the Gentiles. 417—The rejection of the Jews only partial, and temporary. 417—the conversion of the Gentiles will, in part, contribute to convert the Jews. 418—but a time will certainly come, when their *national* conversion shall be effected. 419—The Jew, and Gentile converts exhorted to live together in purity and peace. 419—Instructions with regard to civil government. 420—Difference in opinion should create no animosity amongst christians. 421—The apostle intimates a design of visiting the Roman christians. 424—and concludes with particular commendations; and cautions against ill-designing persons. 425.

* See a note on Acts, xxi. 21.

E P I S T L E

O F

ST. PAUL to the ROMANS.

PAUL, appointed by the immediate revelation of God, to be an apostle of the Gentiles; and to teach the religion of that Saviour, who being foretold by the prophets, and descended in a natural course from David, was declared by miracles, and his resurrection from the dead, to be the Son of God—grace and peace to all the christian converts at Rome.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. 7.

It is with great thankfulness to God, that I hear of your steadiness in the christian faith. My prayers, be assured, you always have; and among my other requests to God, it is one, that I may see you soon; and that we may comfort each other by our spiritual intercourse. Often have I intended to visit you; but have been hitherto prevented. My apostleship extends both to the civilized, and barbarous parts of the

8.

9.

10.

11. 12.

14. 15. 16.
17.

17. *As it is written, the just shall live by faith.* This is a very apposite application of a passage in Habbakuk. That prophet had been representing to the Jews (chap. ii. 4) the approach of captivity; and takes occasion to shew them, that the proud, and obstinate should suffer; and that they who had faith in the prophecy, should escape.—*The righteousness of God* signifies, in this passage, as in other parts of scripture, rather the *manner of being justified*, than the *righteousness of God's nature*.

F f f

Gentile

Gentile world : and I am not ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ, even at Rome—that gospel, which holds out, through faith, the only means of salvation vouchsafed to fallen man.

18. 19. The guilt of sin is pointed out by nature. God hath strongly
 20. impressed a sense of religion, and duty on the minds of men. From
 the visible creation they might have inferred an invisible Creator.
 21. 22. But instead of pursuing such inferences of reason, and shewing that
 gratitude, which they ought, to the divine goodness ; they gave
 23. themselves up to their corrupt imaginations ; setting up the resem-
 blances of men, and even of beasts, as the objects of worship.—
 24. 25. An abominable practice of course followed an abominable religion ;
 26. 27. 28. and there is not a single instance of wickedness, which has not been
 29. 30. 31. commonly practised, and even encouraged in the heathen world.
 32.

C H A P.

II.

1. 2.

3.

4.

In the mean time, is the self-approving Jew less guilty ? In condemning his Gentile neighbours he condemns himself. No doubt he is right, in denouncing the judgments of God against wickedness : but does he not involve himself in the same sentence ? Nay, has he not more to answer for, from his scorning the goodness of God, which would lead him, as it were, by the hand, to repentance—

18. *Who hold the truth in unrighteousness*—who imprison it, as it were, by their wicked lusts, and passions.

21. It is remarkable, that *gratitude* is here put for the whole of religion. Similar expressions are frequent in scripture ; in which a *considerable part* is put for the *whole*.

24, &c. We have the same process of wickedness from idolatry, given us in the Wisdom of Solomon ; in which (cap. XIV) we find the following passages.

“ Therefore upon the idols of the Gentiles shall be a visitation. They are become a stumbling-block to the souls of men. The devising of idols was the beginning of spiritual fornication ; and the invention of them, the corruption of life. They ascribe unto stones, and stocks the *incommunicable name*. Moreover, it was not enough for them, that they erred in the knowledge of God ; they slew their children in sacrifices—they used strange rites—they kept neither lives, nor marriages any longer undefiled—there reigned in all men slaughter, theft, dissimulation, perjury, changing of kind, disorder in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness.—The worshipping of idols is the beginning, the cause, and the end of all evil.”

from

from his rejecting the means of grace—and from his defying that righteous tribunal, which in exact proportion will distribute reward, and punishment both to Jew, and Gentile? There the Jewish prejudice shall have no place. Every sinner, in that righteous day, shall be judged impartially, according to the light he has received. The upright Gentile, and the nominal Jew, shall find very different treatment. Externals will be of no avail.

You call yourself a Jew; you boast of your exact knowledge in the law; and of your being a guide of the ignorant.—But your precepts are confined to others. They direct not your own practice. Your actions contradict your preaching; and you continue to fulfill that ancient complaint of the prophet, that the Jew even increases the irreligion of the Gentile. What! is circumcision, do you suppose, an excuse for sin? Shall that, which profits you only, if you *keep the law*; be a cover to you for *transgressing it*? Shall a mere ceremony, unconnected with morals, give you an advantage over the Gentile? Or rather, shall not his natural probity discountenance you, if you have nothing to boast, but mere externals? It is not outward circumcision, that constitutes the Jew: it is the circumcision of the heart only, which meets the approbation of God.

Since then both Jews, and Gentiles are thus equally involved in guilt, it may be asked, What advantage ariseth from the Jewish dispensation?

C H A P.
III.
1.

12. *As many as have sinned without law*—that is, without the Mosaic law, or under the law of nature.

16. I have here transposed the 16th verse, and added it to the 12th, following the opinion of some able interpreters.

21. See Matt. xxiii. 3.

22. *Idolatry* is spiritual *sacrilege*. In Justinian's code, under the title of sacrilege we find, *Imperatori eripere, quod ejus est*.

24. This alludes probably to Ezek. xxxvi. 23: or Isa. lii. 5.

2. I answer, chiefly in it's being the vehicle of conveying through
 3. different ages, God's promises of salvation; which are, and will
 4. be compleated, notwithstanding the infidelity of the Jews themselves.
 5. The infidelity of man only the more recommends the truth of
 6. God.

7. If then, replies the Jew, the truth of God be recommended by
 8. my infidelity; does it not seem hard, that I, who am the author
 9. of so happy an effect, should be the object of God's displeasure?

10. What! shall we impute injustice, in any instance, to the great
 11. Judge of heaven and earth? Extend the doctrine farther: let every
 12. other sinner conceive himself the favorite of heaven; and let the
 13. slander pass universally, that the apostles of Christ preach the neces-
 14. sity of evil, that good may arise from it.—I hope so mischievous
 15. an error will never get ground among you.

16. On the whole then we conclude, that both Jew, and Gentile
 17. are in a sinful, unjustified state—a state described by David in the
 18. fourteenth psalm, and in other parts of scripture, where we have
 19. catalogues given of various kinds of wickedness. The Jew may
 20. apply such passages perhaps only to the Gentile: but let him be
 21. assured, that an application was intended also to him. The prophet
 22. undoubtedly means to describe the *universal guilt of mankind*.—From
 23. hence therefore we conclude that the law could not justify. It gave
 24. man indeed a more accurate knowledge of sin; but could not save
 25. him from it's effects.

26. But now another mode of salvation, and yet testified by the law,
 27. and the prophets, is offered to mankind; tho the law itself could
 28. not offer one—salvation through faith in Christ; which as *all had*
 29. *sinned*, is freely *offered to all*. This great mode of salvation God

20. By the *law* here the apostle seems to mean (in order to give his argument it's full force)
law of every kind, moral, and ceremonial.

hath now held forth for the remission of sins; and hath in one act, 26.
declared both his truth in the completion of his promises; and
his goodness in shewing mercy to sinful man. All pre-eminence 27.
then and boasting are excluded. The privileges of the law are of 28.
no avail. God is not now stiled the God of Israel; but the God 29.
of all mankind. The circumcised, and uncircumcised are all just- 30.
ified alike by faith; which is so far from being contradictory to 31.
the law, that in fact it is a confirmation of it by establishing it's
promises.

Indeed you will find this mode of justification by faith even
prior to the law. Consider the case of Abraham. On what, I ask,
was his justification grounded? You find nothing said of his glorying
in any works, or observances; or, of his being justified by any
thing of that kind. But you read, that *he believed in God*; and
that this *belief was counted to him for righteousness*. Now if Abraham
had depended on his own righteousness for his justification, he
would have claimed it *as his due*. But you see he makes no such
claim; receiving it as the free grace of God, who accepted his
faith for righteousness: just as David also speaks of God's justifying
his faithful people by mercifully blotting out their sins.

C H A P.

IV.

1. 2.

3.

4.

5.

6. 7. 8.

9. 10.

The present question then, how far the Jewish law avails in
justifying it's professors, admits an easy answer from the case of

28. The word *law* in this passage, seems to be confined to the Mosaic law.

30. *By faith and through faith* seem to convey the same meaning.

3. Gen. xv. 6.

3. As a comment on St. Paul in this place, we must read the following passage from St. James ii. 21. *Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar? Seest thou, how faith wrought with his works; and by works was faith made perfect.* From the comparison of these two passages we conclude, that it was the holy life, which Abraham led, through his faith in the promises of God, that was his recommendation to mercy.

8. See Ps. xxxii. 1.

Abraham.

Abraham. We have seen that Abraham *was justified by faith*. We
 11. 12. 13. find also, that he was justified, *before he was circumcised*. Circum-
 cision therefore, so far from being the *cause of his acceptance* with
 God, was only the *seal of that acceptance*, which had been vouchsafed
 to him *through faith*. Thus he became properly the father of all
 14. true believers, without any distinction of Jew, or Gentile. So
 that if the Jews claim the inheritance of the promise from Abraham,
 merely as Jews, they plainly set aside the only title, by which that
 15. 16. 17. patriarch himself inherited; and leave themselves still under the
 penalties of the law. God hath promised acceptance therefore on
 the condition of *faith*; which is not only an easier condition; but
 the only way he hath appointed to fulfill the promise made to
 Abraham, of making him *the father of many nations*.

18. 19. 20. Consider then the nature of Abraham's faith. God had promised
 21. 22. him a numerous posterity in his old age; which to him appeared
 like raising the dead. He had such faith however in God, that
 without hesitation he firmly believed, that he, who promised, was
 able to perform: and this faith was imputed to him for righte-
 ousness.

23. 24. 25. Nor can we suppose that Abraham's faith was casually mentioned.
 It was recorded certainly for our instruction. The same righteousness
 will be imputed to us, if we follow the example of Abraham;
 and as firmly believe in that God, who raised up Christ from the
 dead; who dying for our offences, rose again to establish, and
 confirm his promises.

13. *Heir of the world*; that is, of all the faithful, that should be collected from every part
 of the world; who should be given him, as it were, for a posterity. The Hebrews use the
 word *heir* in that sense.

17. *Who calleth those things*, &c. that is, who speaketh of things, which do not yet exist,
 as if they really did exist; because he foresees their existence in due time.

24. The nature of Abraham's faith is here again plain from this passage. He believed in
 the promises of God; and through that faith he performed the will of God.

On this true faith then let us rest; and having obtained peace with God through Christ, let us evermore rejoice in this blessed hope; and be ready to suffer any affliction for the sake of our profession. Affliction is the nurse of every christian virtue; and tends, in proportion as the love of the world fails, to dilate our hearts with the love of God—of that God, who gave his Son to die for us, even when we were the greatest sinners. However upright a man's general character may be, he will not easily find a friend ready to suffer death for his sake. Where benefits indeed have been conferred, the effects of gratitude may be great. In what light then should we consider the love of God, who gave his Son to die for us, even when we were engaged in the most hardened opposition to him? From such an instance of kindness in the death of Christ, we cannot but have the most assured hope from his resurrection; and evermore rejoice in that great atonement, which has opened to us everlasting happiness.

Thus was redemption, through Christ, as general, as death through Adam. For tho Adam's *mode of transgression* could not be general; yet every man followed his example, and sinned against some law: for where there is no law, there can be no sin. And thus from Adam's time, the reign of death has been universal.—But now observe the difference between the fall, and the redemption of

3. *We glory in tribulation.* The apostle very often advances this doctrine, to shew the Jews the nature of Christ's kingdom; as our Saviour before had often shewn his disciples. The Jews from the beginning were unwilling to acknowledge, that the Messiah's kingdom was to have any thing to do with tribulation.

6. Ὑπερ πάντων ἀπέθανε properly signifies *he died in the room, or stead of sinners.*

7. Goodwin in his Jewish antiquities, (l. I. c. IX) has a very ingenious explication of this celebrated passage. He supposes it to allude to the rabbinical distinction of mankind, into *good, righteous, and sinful.* The *good* man is he, who acts in a sphere, superior to all human laws; while the *righteous* man is satisfied with the boundaries they allow him.—Some instead of δικαίον read ἀδίκον.—It is thus in the Syrian version.

mankind.

- mankind. Observe how much the benefit of the latter outweighs the injury of the former. By the one, *Adam's particular trespass* was punished: through the other, *all our sins in general* are forgiven. By the former, *death* was incurred: by the latter *eternal happiness* was obtained. And observe farther, that as all the nations of the earth were rendered guilty by the offence of Adam; it follows, that all the nations of the earth shall be restored by Christ. The law, no doubt, gave new powers to sin; and the more sin triumphs, so much greater appears the efficacy of grace, which counteracts its ruinous effects.
- CHAP. VI.
1. Shall we then make the grace of the gospel an apology for sin? 2. God forbid! The christian, by his profession, is dead to sin. 3. 4. The very act of his initiation implies it. What does baptism represent, but our dying to sin, and rising to righteousness? 5. 6. How again are we to imitate the death of Christ, but by crucifying our sins; that being renewed in righteousness by his death, we may partake of his resurrection? He that is *dead*, is free from sin. 7. 8. The life of a christian should be such a *death*. Unless, in this moral sense, we die with Christ, we cannot hope to live with him. 9. 10. After his crucifixion, Christ died no more. Having died once for sin, an eternity of life was before him. You too have died once to sin: be now therefore for ever alive to God, through 11. Christ.—Let the christian then, as far as he can, make this 12. 13. mortal life a life of purity; and dedicate all his passions, and affections to that holiness; which his profession demands. Being 14. delivered from the terror of the law, he is now received into mercy 15. through grace.—Only still let me caution you not to presume 16. on God's grace. Your service must not be divided between sin, and the gospel. You must renounce the one, before you can 17. 18. 19. attach yourselves to the other. But I trust in God, your choice

4. This idea alludes to the ancient mode of immersion.

is already made; and that, whatever you *may have been*, you *have now* withdrawn yourselves from the bondage of sin, and dedicated yourselves to a happier service.—Take then a review of your lives; and consider, whether any advantages accrued from sin, which were equivalent to it's consequences—whether any of it's enjoyments could counterbalance misery, and death? Consider also, whether you have any reason to repent of these new engagements; which lead you through a life of holiness, to everlasting happiness?

20. 21.

22. 23.

C H A P.
VII.

1. 2. 3.

Having thus addressed myself to christian converts, in general, I now address myself particularly to the Jewish christian. His attachment to the Mosaic law, is exactly similar to the case of marriage; which is only an obligation, till the death of one of the parties. So that the law, to which you were once espoused, being now dead, it is no more apostasy in you to embrace the gospel; than it is adultery for a woman to be married to a second husband, after the death of a first. From the effect of those transgressions, which under the Mosaic law, admitted only legal atonement, you are now delivered: your services are now transferred from carnal observances, to spiritual attainments.

4.

5. 6.

Does the law then, you ask, lead us into sin?

7.

No otherwise than by giving us a more exact knowledge of it; and revealing to us God's commandments against it. Thus, for instance, I should never have known the guilt of covetousness, unless the law had said, *Thou shalt not covet*. For the guilt of sin is increased in proportion to the clearness of the law against it. Had you been born Gentiles, you would have known less; and of course have sinned less. But the knowledge of the law

8.

9. 10. 11.

1. *As long as he liveth*. It should be translated, *as long as it liveth*; meaning the law.

12. 13. 14. introduced also the knowledge of sin. The law then is good ;
 15. but it is our transgression of it, which is the mischief. Our
 16. 17. 18. transgressions are all against knowledge. The very witness of my
 19. conscience proves the excellency of the law. What is right, I
 know. The difficulty lies in the performance. In fact through
 20. 21. 22. the corruption of my nature I cannot fulfill the law. While we
 23. live in the world, we shall always experience the opposition be-
 tween the law of God, and the temptations of worldly things :
 24. and in the extremity of guilt, the Jew, as well as the Gentile,
 must cry out, Who will deliver me from this cruel bondage ?

25.
 C H A P.
 VIII.

1.
 2. 3. 4.

5. 6.

7. 8. 9.

10. 11.

Here then comes in the gracious offer of the gospel, which
 alone can hold out a remedy in our distress. That remission of
 sin, which the law could not provide, the gospel offers to all,
 who live agreeably to it's precepts. We are freed from the effects
 of sin and death ; and in the room of that perfect obedience, which
 the law demands, the gospel graciously points out, through Christ,
 the humble endeavours of a spiritual life ; to which it's motives,
 aided by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, as naturally lead, as
 the motives of the world do to a carnal life : and this carnal life
 tends as directly to misery, as the spiritual life does to hap-
 piness. For the worldly mind is always at enmity with God.
 It is the heavenly mind only that is pleasing to him : and if you
 live under the influence of God's blessed Spirit, which dwells in
 you ; you are then, and then only, of Christ's fold. In that
 blessed state you are subject to no death, but a mere temporal

24. *Who will deliver me from the body of this death ?* Some have thought that the apostle here alludes to the cruel custom often practised by tyrants, of tying dead bodies to those, which are alive. It may be an apposite allusion, but it is perhaps too remote.

11. Mr. Locke supposes, that the apostle is not here speaking of the *resurrection* ; but of that *principle of spiritual life*, which we receive through the Spirit of God. And this indeed may perhaps be the better sense. There is great force, I think, in what Mr. Locke says. He translates ζωνταίνουσι και, *shall quicken even*.

dissolution :

dissolution: the soul is raised to life through the atonement of Christ. *His* resurrection is an earnest of *yours*.

Be not then, my brethren, alive only to this world. Bury
 your sinful affections, that you may live for ever. None are the
 children of God; but they, who are guided by his Spirit. All
 slavish notions in religion are removed. God graciously styles him-
 self our Father. Let us then be his obedient children; and en-
 deavour to attain that glorious inheritance, which is promised to
 those, who renounce sin, and vanity for his sake; and consider
 this world only as a progress to the next.

And indeed what is the value of it? What proportion does your
 short time here, bear to an eternity of happiness hereafter—
 that great point, to which all the race of mankind have ever
 looked up with so much anxious expectation? For there has
 ever been in mankind, lost as they are, yet formed originally for
 immortality, some heavenly spark of hope; that after throwing off
 this fleshly incumbrance, they should become the partakers of a
 more glorious state. The blind heathen expected this state, as
 well as we, who have the assurance of it from God. We all live
 in hope. A state of enjoyment, is not the state of this world:
 but a religious hope carries us through all it's afflictions. In our
 infirmities we pray; and often ignorantly: but the Holy Spirit
 of God suggests a language of the heart beyond the power of words
 —a language, which He, who searcheth the heart, will always
 graciously interpret.

19. I have applied this, and the following verses to the heathen world, as Dr. Whitby, and other learned commentators have done. Dr. Doddridge applies them to the whole creation. Either application, I think, makes good sense.

22. There is something very beautiful in thus introducing the whole creation, as if travelling in birth—throwing off the load of nature, and producing a new offspring from grace.

26. See a note on Luke x. 40.

28. Be assured therefore, that in whatever afflictions you may fall, the course of this world will always work out good to those, who have been called to the blessings of the gospel; and obey it's precepts. 29. Keep therefore this gracious call, which you have had, continually in your minds. Remember always, that your heavenly Father, with a foreknowledge, that comprehends all events, originally intended you to be partakers of these blessings. 30. You have been called; and if you obey that call, you shall in consequence be justified, and glorified—How then ought these things to affect us? 31. If God be with us, what matters it, who is against us? He who gave his only Son to die for our sins, we may rest assured will deny 32. us nothing, that is proper for us.—Regard not then the opposition of those, who would deprive you of these blessings. Who is he that condemneth? And who is *He* that justifieth? Make the comparison yourselves; and consider the love of Christ, who died for 33. 34. our sins, and now maketh intercession for us with God. Let 35. 36. nothing then in this world—not even it's most formidable terrors, 37. 38. 39. interrupt the joys of religion: but let us triumph over it's afflictions; persuading ourselves, that if our own endeavours are not wanting, nothing in this mortal state, neither the fears of death, nor the hopes of life—neither wicked men, nor wicked spirits—neither adversity, nor prosperity, can separate us from the love of God through Christ.

28. The apostle here seems to address himself to the Gentile christian; whom God, in his foreknowledge, decreed, should be called into the church of Christ; or, in St. Paul's language, *should be conformed to the image of his Son*. Mr. Parkhurst has examined all the passages, in the New Testament in which προορίζω (to predestinate) occurs. From a diligent attention to them, says he, the reader may determine for himself, whether in any one of them it has any relation to an absolute, unconditional predestination of particular persons to eternal salvation. See Park. Lex.

But

But however glorious an event the calling of the Gentiles may be; the rejection of the Jews is certainly a very melancholy one. It oppresses me with sorrow; and I should chearfully devote myself to death, if my sufferings could be of service to that people—once so favoured—in covenant with God—the depositories of his law—and above all, that honoured nation, which hath given birth to the Messiah.

I mean not however to insinuate, that God had not entirely fulfilled his promises to the Jews. It was never *supposed*, that a bare descent from the patriarchs was the only title of a true Israelite: nor that the promise should extend to the Jews, merely as the children of Abraham. Abraham had many sons: but none of them inherited, except Isaac. *Sarah shall have a son*, are the words of the promise: by which we are taught, that it was not merely a descent from Abraham, that gave a title to it.—The same selection was shewn in the case of Jacob. The national blessings promised to Isaac, were continued to that patriarch in preference to Esau.

3. The words of the original *πυχομένη γὰρ αὐτός ἐγὼ ἀναδέμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, are variously interpreted. Some suppose an exclusion is meant only from the visible church of Christ. Others, among whom is the learned Dr. Whitby, take the words literally, as if the apostle really wished himself accursed; solving the harshness of the supposition, at the same time, by saying, the word *πυχομένη* signifies, *I could even wish*; that is, *if such a wish could be of any avail*.—Others make *ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ* to signify *after the manner of Christ*.—After all, perhaps, as the words contain no doctrine, the apostle had no absolute precise meaning; but only shewed the ardour of his love, by an earnest, hyperbolical mode of speaking.

5. No criticisms on the words of the original *ὅτι ἐπὶ πάντων*, &c. have been able, I think, to overthrow their force, in proving the divinity of Christ. To give the argument however it's full scope, examine Bowyer's conjectures on the place, who candidly states the authorities, on which the opinions with regard to this text depend.

11. It is plain the *everlasting state* of Jacob and Esau, as *individuals*, is not here even hinted at. The passage plainly alludes to Gen. xxv. 23. *And the Lord, said unto her. Two nations are in thy womb; and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and one people shall be stronger, than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

What

14. What has the Jew then to object? He was received, as descended from Isaac, in preference to Ishmael: can he then murmur at God's
 15. 16. now accepting the *Gentile* on an equality with him? Even his own lawgiver informs him, that God confers national blessings
 17. for his own wife reasons, and at his own good pleasure.—Thus also God takes his own time for punishing; as he saith to Pharoah, I have exalted thee, for the very purpose of making thee an instance
 18. of my power. Thus God assumes to himself, without explaining his reasons, the power of conferring *national blessings* on some, and making *public examples* of others.
19. You will perhaps then ask, Why God finds fault with the Jewish nation, who only fulfilled his will?
20. 21. Every demand of this kind is impious. Nations in the hands of the Creator, are clay in the hands of the potter. Each vessel receives

15. Exod. xxxiii. 19.

17. The passage alludes to Exod. ix. 16. which relates both to Pharoah and his people, whom God in that *public manner* plagued for their sins, as it is expressly said, *to make his name to be declared through all the earth.*

17. The word St. Paul uses, is ἐξήνεξα, which, literally no doubt, signifies, as we translate it, *I have raised up*: but I think it may also, without any force, signify, *I have raised thee to thy power*; or I have given thee thy exaltation.—The septuagint hath translated the Hebrew of Moses by the word, διατηρηθης; which signifies, *thou hast been preserved*; that is, kept alive under these plagues, for this very purpose.

18. *Whom he will, he hardeneth.* It is evident from the whole Mosaic history, that what God did to Pharoah tended naturally to *soften* him; tho Pharoah like other sinners, turned those means of *softening*, into *hardening*: so that in God's agency here, one step seems to be sunk; and the *hardening* is made God's deed; tho in fact it was Pharoah's. Pharoah was a wicked prince. God did not make him so, that he might be an instance of his power: but being a wicked prince, God made him the *example he intended.*

21. St. Paul's words allude manifestly to a passage of Jeremiah, (xviii. 2.) which greatly illustrates them, as it has a plain reference—not to *individuals*; but to the *whole Jewish nation.* “Arise, and go down to the potter's house. Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you

receives it's proper form; itself uninstructed in it's maker's purpose.

Suppose God, to make his indignation against sin the more exemplary, hath reserved the impenitent Jews to be punished in one general, or national rejection: suppose also, that to shew the extent of his grace, he hath taken the Gentiles, as well as us, who believe, within the covenant of grace; is this more than the prophet Hosea expressly tells us? *I will call them my people, who were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved; that is, I will form a church among the Gentiles, where formerly it did not exist.*—But with regard to the salvation of *individuals*, doth not Isaiah speak with equal plainness? *Tho the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea,—a remnant shall be left. The issues of the Lord's wrath, however decisive they may appear, shall overflow with righteousness.* And again, *Except a remnant had been left, we should have been utterly destroyed like Sodom, and Gomorrha.*—Thus then the Gentiles have obtained justification by faith; which the Jews in vain attempted to obtain by the observances of their law. Salvation through faith in Christ, was a stumbling block to them, as the prophet had foretold it should be: *Behold I lay in*

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23. 24.

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30. 31.

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33.

you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.—At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it——if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice; then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."

It is remarkable too, that in the contents prefixed to this chapter in our English Bible, we are informed, that, *Under the type of a potter, is shewed God's absolute power in disposing of nations*: which plainly shews, that the reformers of those days, did not draw this allegory to countenance the doctrine often built on God's foreknowledge.

25. Hosea i. 10—ii. 23.

27. If. x. 22, 23.

29. If. i. 9.

33. Isa. viii. 14.—xxviii. 16.

Sion.

CHAP. *Sion a stumbling stone, and rock of offence; but whosoever believeth on*
 X. *him, shall not be ashamed.*

1. And yet I hope, and pray, that God will at length accept this
 2. hardened nation; which, after all, it must be acknowledged, hath
 3. a religious zeal. Ill directed it certainly is. Instead of obtain-
 4. ing justification in God's way, they attempt it in their own; not
 5. 6. 7. considering that their law is an introduction only to the gospel.
 8. 9. 10. And indeed unless we consider the language of Moses himself
 in this light, (as making the law an introduction to the gospel)
 it would imply a sort of contradiction. In one passage he speaks
 of the great difficulty of *observing* the law; as when he pronounces
 a curse on every man, who does not obey it, in all it's parts.
 In another, he speaks of the removal of all difficulty; and of the
easiness of performance: plainly intimating, that the harsh, and im-
 practicable terms of the law, should in time be superseded by a
 covenant, which should offer salvation on the easier terms of
 faith †.

† I have endeavoured to give the scope of the apostle's meaning in this difficult passage; in which he applies the words of Moses, in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, to the gospel. Whoever compares Deut. xxvii. 26, or Levit. x. 5, with Deut. xxx. 12, 13, 14, which the apostle almost literally quotes, will see that Moses gives in these two several passages, very different representations. In one he speaks of the *difficulty*; in the other of the *easiness* of the law; and the apostle seems to apply these latter passages to the gospel. I dare not however lay much stress on this interpretation. All I can say, is, that I am dissatisfied with all the interpretations I have seen.—A friend gave me the following explication of these difficult verses; of which the reader may judge.

As Moses warned the Jews not to suffer their faith, and practice to languish from any pretended obscurity, which they might say, veiled the word of God from their eyes; for it was “nigh them, even in their mouth, and in their heart”—so do I, says the apostle, warn you against such infidelity with regard to the acknowledgment of Christ. You have seen him come down from above—You have seen him rise from the dead. Do not therefore say, Who shall bring Christ from heaven, or who shall bring him from the dead? But confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart, that God hath raised him from the dead.

On the whole, the tender of the gospel is universal. God makes no distinction between Jew, and Gentile; but promises to receive into favour all, who accept his gracious offer. *Whosoever, faith the prophet, shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*

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C H A P.
XI.

1. 2. 3.

As therefore God meant to make a gracious offer to the Gentiles, the necessity of *preaching* the gospel to them, immediately appears. And however inadequate the success; yet still, as preaching is the appointed mean, it must of course be every where continued and extended. Let the Jews therefore recollect some of the predictions of their prophets on this head. Moses tells them, *they should be moved to jealousy by the nations they despised*;—and Isaiah represents the Almighty discovering himself *to nations, that knew him not*;—and *taxing the Jews with their obstinacy and infidelity.*

We must not however suppose the Jews are totally cast off. God forbid, that I should use such language towards that nation, with which I must ever consider myself as connected. God, who foreknows all things, will not intirely cast them off. Elijah formerly cried out, *Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone; and they seek my life also.* But recollect what answer God returns: *There are yet seven thousand*

4.

13. Joel ii. 32.

14. The preaching here meant is the *apostolic mode* of preaching, attended by miraculous powers. Preaching the gospel among heathen nations by simple missionaries, without these marks of a divine commission, was what the apostles never attempted. After the gospel was fully established, it appears to have been the design of Providence to bring about the conversion of heathen nations by the gradual progress of civilization; which seems at this time to be working in all parts of the world. Nor is the badness of the instruments, in some parts, any objection: God works with instruments of every kind.

19. Deut. xxxii. 21.

20. If. lxv. 1.

21. If. lxv. 2.

3. 1 Kings xix. 14.

4. 1 Kings xix. 18.

5. *in Israel, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.* We consider the
 6. Jews in the same situation now. Tho as a *nation* they are rejected;
 7. yet many *individuals* are in a state of grace. But they must ever
 8. remember, that *it is* a state of grace; and that their salvation is
 9. not derived from any merit of their own performances. Such
 10. only meet the acceptance of God, whose salvation is derived from
 11. Christ. All who reject this mode of salvation, are in that state
 12. of hardened guilt, which the prophet describes by *eyes that see not,*
 13. *and ears that hear not*; and other circumstances, which denote
 14. great perverseness, and infidelity. God forbid however, that we
 15. should consider the Jews as utterly lost. Let us rather hope, that
 16. by the call of the Gentiles, they may in the end be incited to
 17. embrace that offer, which they have now rejected. And as their
 18. loss has been a gain to the Gentile world; their recovery will be
 19. matter of joy to all christians. I glory in being the apostle of
 20. the Gentiles; yet still must I earnestly strive to promote the sal-
 21. vation of my own countrymen; and repeat, that their conversion
 22. will be matter of great joy to the whole christian world. The
 23. Jewish nation must always be considered as the root, from which
 christianity springs. You Gentiles are only grafts upon that an-
 cient stock. From it your nourishment arose. You are ingrafted
 where the original branches were broken off. Take care therefore,
 lest that infidelity, which destroyed them, be not also destructive
 to you. If the natural branches were not spared; much less rea-
 son have you to hope, who are only ingrafted.—And now ob-
 serve, how amiably, and yet how awfully, the kindness, and se-

7. So I should explain, what St. Paul here calls *election*.

16. *If the first-fruit be holy, the lump also is holy.* This alludes to the offering of the first-fruits; which made the harvest to be esteemed clean. Thus the apostle considers the Jews as the first-fruits, as it were, of that holiness, which was introduced by christianity. Unless that first-fruit had been holy, neither could the whole body of revealed religion, which was connected with it, have been holy.

verity

verity of God are tempered together—kindness to you ; and severity to the impenitent Jews. May you both improve under a just sense of these holy dispensations ! Take you care, not to change the kindness of God into severity : and let them endeavour to avert that severity, and change it into kindness. God's mercies will ever be tender towards them. They are the ancient branches ; and may therefore more readily be ingrafted upon their old stock.

In the spirit of prophecy we foresee a time, after the conversion of the Gentile world shall be effected, when all Israel shall be gathered into the fold of Christ. Hitherto your obedience hath taken the place of their infidelity : but God will never forget his covenant with their fathers ; nor repent the promises he made to their posterity. Once you were in a state of infidelity ; but were enlightened by them : they are now in that state themselves ; and shall hereafter be enlightened by you. Thus all the world, both Jews, and Gentiles, each infidel by turns, shall finally be the objects of God's mercy.—How wonderful are the effects of his wisdom, and knowledge ! To us his ways are wholly inscrutable. It is evident we are indebted to ourselves for nothing. To him therefore be ascribed, from all his creatures, that glory, which is due for ever ! Amen.

Let me exhort you, therefore, my brethren, to live worthy of this holy call. Whether Jews, or Gentiles, relinquish intirely your former rites ; and in their room offer to God each his own body, as a living sacrifice, cleansed from the pollutions of the world ; and purified by holy affections.—Nor on the other hand, let your spiritual endowments create any pride, or jealousy among you. The church of Christ, like the human body, consists of various members ; and each member hath it's respective use. One interprets scripture : another bears some office in the church : a third is engaged in teach-

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C H A P.
XII.

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- ing: a fourth distributes the public charity: a fifth takes charge of the sick, and stranger. Whatever the employment be, let undissembled love preside: and shew the sincerity of that love by your readiness on all occasions, to prefer others to yourselves. Be active also, and vigilant; always remembering that heavenly Master, whom you serve. Let your future hopes overbalance your present distresses; and let trust in God, and constant prayer be your support. When a charitable office of any kind is in your power, never fail to perform it. Prayers, and good wishes, at least, are always in your power: at all times you ought to enter tenderly into the feelings of others: and let the lowest of the people engage your attention, as well as the highest.—But beware of self-sufficiency. Let all your dealings be honest, and fair, and open in the sight of all men. Of malice in every shape divest yourselves. Live peaceably, and inoffensively towards all men; and if any man injure you, by no means retaliate. Return good for evil; and leave your cause in the hands of God. Endeavour if possible, by acts of kindness, to make your enemy a friend.

C H A P.
XIII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

As to the affairs of civil government, the christian religion leaves them just as it found them. It claims no authority in matters of this kind; only in general inculcates the necessity of obedience.

13. The apostle *here* mentions hospitality, which duly defined, is certainly a virtue *every where*; but in those countries, where places of entertainment were not always to be met with, it was a more necessary virtue, than in such a country as this, where many things take the name of *hospitality*, which have no pretensions to it. The apostle defines it by the expression, *distributing to necessity*; which is certainly the only true definition of it. You *give alms*, to those who are in *indigence*; you are *hospitable* to those, who, tho not in indigence, are under some temporary *necessity*, from which you can relieve them.

20. *Heaping coals of fire* is a sentiment taken from Prov. xxv. 21. St. Austin explains it from the idea of melting metal in a furnace; and in the turn of the expression in the 21st verse the apostle *seems* to have had that idea.

Civil

Civil government is of God's appointment. The constitution of this world requires it. It is necessary to awe the guilty, and protect the innocent. He therefore who opposes civil government, opposes God. Let the christian therefore only differ from other subjects, in shewing that obedience from *conscience*, which they shew from *fear*†.—Taxes also are the necessary support of government. Let these, together with a proper respect to all in authority, be duly paid. And be assured, that he will always be the best subject, who is the best christian. For that universal benevolence, which christianity prescribes, will the most effectually prevent the transgression of every law; and of course the most effectually fulfill it.—We christians have motives beyond all other people to draw us to our duty. The night of this world is well nigh over. We consider the day as beginning to dawn. Let us then lay aside whatever relates to darkness; and make preparation only for the approaching light.

One point more let me insist on. As the christian church among you consists both of Jewish, and Gentile converts, let all unchari-

C H A P.
XIV.

1. 2. 3. 4.

† These cautions are chiefly given to the Jewish converts, who still thought the *chosen people of God* were subject only to his government; and had nothing to do with those of the heathen. The apostle's instructions therefore respect not *this*, or *that mode* of government; but government in *general*; and cannot with any propriety, be brought to support the slavish doctrines of passive obedience, and non-resistance. The christian in his *civil capacity*, like other men, will act as his judgment directs; only his religion, which gives him many new principles, will direct his judgment better; and in this matter, as in all others, will give him more modesty, and forbearance.

13. Some whimsical interpreters translate κοιτας (which we translate *chambering*) *lying in bed in a morning*. It is certain, if there be no direct precept in scripture, to enforce early rising, it may easily be inferred. An hour or two gained in a morning, makes a greater difference in a life-time, than one should easily suppose, without making a calculation.

14. How strongly the apostle expresses his sense, in saying, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*. Be ye clothed as it were with him. Plutarch tells us, that the kings of Persia always put on, at their coronation, the robe of Cyrus, by way of shewing the people, they intended to imitate his virtues.

1. Μη εις διατριψεις διαλογισμων, should be rather *not to form judgments of his thoughts*; than, as our version has it, *not to doubtful disputations*.

table:

table animosities with regard to religious opinions be laid aside. He, who makes no distinction among meats, ought not to despise him who is more scrupulous, and cannot at once lay his scruples aside. He is not accountable to man; and in the sight of a gracious God, these
 5. externals are of little consequence.—Thus again, he who makes
 6. 7. 8. 9. no distinction among days, should treat his brother, who does
 make a distinction, with the same forbearance. For I trust that
 every one of you, in these things, follows the dictates of his con-
 science; not acting from any sinister motive; but from a sense of
 that obligation to religious duty, which the death, and resurrection
 10. 11. 12. of his blessed Saviour hath laid upon him.—Lay aside therefore
 all uncharitableness about these indifferent matters; and leave your
 brother's conduct to the judgment of God, who will call us all to
 13. a righteous account. Instead therefore of being offended at the con-
 14. duct of others, take care to be inoffensive in your own. I am myself
 persuaded, that a christian may safely eat any kind of food; but he,
 15. who is not so persuaded, ought to refrain. And even he, who hath
 no scruple of his own, ought by no means to give offence to him,
 16. who hath one; nor subject the holy religion he professes, to any
 17. uncharitable aspersions. For tho' the spirit of the gospel is little
 concerned in these indifferent matters; yet it is very essentially
 concerned in maintaining peace, and charity, and happiness among
 18. christians. These are the things, which make you useful to each
 19. other, and acceptable to God.—Cultivate then this peaceable
 20. disposition, as the best mean of mutual improvement. For however
 indifferent these things may be in themselves; yet, as he acts wrong,
 21. who in the merest trifle acts against his conscience; so of course he
 acts equally wrong, who thus turns a trifle into a matter of offence.

3. By *him that eateth*, the apostle probably means the less scrupulous Gentile; and by him that *eateth not*, the more scrupulous Jew.

Be satisfied then with the liberty you allow yourselves: only be careful, that religion, and conscience allow it likewise: for in all cases of this kind, *doubt* is *guilt*.

22. 23.

Nor is it only in the matter of meats, but in every thing else, you should be ready to bear with the weaknesses of others. Remember the blessed example of our Saviour. Remember, how particularly marked it is by the prophets for a humble and charitable submission to the weaknesses of others. Learn then from these great characters, thus marked by the prophets, and fulfilled by Christ, those principles of christian charity, which are the foundation of all your hopes. And may God Almighty enable you to reduce them to practice; that your petitions to God may ascend from hearts full of love to each other!—In a word, shew that affection to each other, which Christ shewed to us all. Let the Gentile respect the Jew; as Christ was in a peculiar manner the Messiah of the Jews by fulfilling the predictions of their prophets. And let the Jew respect the Gentile; as he equally fulfils the predictions of the same prophets; who have with one voice notified his gracious call to the blessings of the gospel.—God grant, that you may all believe the great truths of the gospel; and rejoice in it's blessed hopes, with unanimity, and peace! And tho I doubt not your kindness to each other, even among your religious differences; yet as your apostle, I thought it right to mention these things. Like the priest of the Jewish law, I consider myself as offering to God the sacrifice of the Gentile world. But all glorying with regard to myself, is totally suppressed by a sense of God's grace, under which I act. My

C H A P.
XV.

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23. Our translation expresses the original too strongly. *He that doubteth, is damned, if he eat.* The apostle only means to express the wrongness of any action, about which we doubt. *Damned* should be translated *condemned*; or in his own conscience convicted.

9. 10. 11. 12. The prophecies referred to, which announce the call of the Gentiles, are Pf. xviii. 49. Deut. xxxii. 43. Ps. cxvii. 1. Isa. xi. 10.

OWN

19. own power is nothing. I act merely by the power of God ; which
 20. 21. hath enabled me by miracles to spread the gospel through many of
 the countries of Greece ; in all which I have applied myself to those
 only, who had never heard of the gospel before ; that I might take
 all the labour to myself, and according to the prophet, preach to
 such, as had never been instructed.
22. On this account, my design of visiting you hath hitherto been
 23. 24. prevented ; tho I hope I shall soon see you, as my ministry in
 these parts is now finished. I mean to take a journey into Spain ;
 and I propose to visit you in my way thither ; both that I
 may gratify my own affection, and yours ; and that I may receive
 25. 26. 27. your assistance in proceeding farther. But I shall first go to Jeru-
 28. salem. The Greek christians have raised a contribution for their
 poor brethren there, and I shall go thither to present it. When
 I shall have disposed of this charity (if I may call by that name,
 what, in a spiritual light, is indeed rather a debt) I shall imme-
 29. diately begin my journey to Spain ; and I doubt not, but I shall
 have reason to meet you in all the fulness of apostolic love.—
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21. If. lii. 15.

29. Who can help admiring, with what ease the holy apostle, now advanced in years, talks of travelling, not from one town, or district to another ; but from continent to continent ? When St. Paul wrote this epistle, he was most probably, at Corinth ; and proposed first to go to Jerusalem ; and from thence by Rome into Spain. In what way this journey was undertaken, we are not given to understand. If the whole of it were performed by sea ; at the lowest calculation it must have extended three thousand miles : if by land, almost double that space. But however performed, we cannot suppose it to have been very commodious. If we judge from the apostle's general account of his travels, the difficulties which he encountered, both by sea, and land, must have been very great. “ In journeyings often—in perils of water—in perils of robbers—in perils in the sea—in perils in the wilderness. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A day, and a night I have been in the deep. In weariness, and painfulness—in watchings often—in hunger and thirst ; in cold, and nakedness.” 2 Cor. xi. 26, &c.

Good God, enable the present ministers of thy word to keep these labours of thy holy apostle so far at least in view, as to prevent their considering many things in their profession as insuperable difficulties, which to him would not have appeared in the light of inconveniences !

In

—In the mean time, my brethren, unite with me in prayer, that I may be protected in all difficulties, and dangers arising from unbelievers—that I may perform my commission acceptably at Jerusalem—and meet you through God's will, in peace and love. And may the God of peace be with you all: Amen.

30. 31. 32.

33.

C H A P.
XVI.

1. 2.

3—15.

16.

I commend to your particular attention the bearer of this epistle, Phœbe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea; who hath been of great service to many here; and to myself in particular. I desire also to be remembered, with kind affection, to all the brethren with you, whose various services are highly acceptable to me: and may that affection, which I shew to you, spread equally among yourselves!

In the mean time, avoid communication with such persons, as teach any doctrine contrary to what you have received; and let not their interested, and deceitful views impose upon you. The purity of your conversion is every where mentioned; and I hope you will not suffer the artifices of designing men to mislead you. God's Holy Spirit will support your endeavours; and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ever rest upon you!—All the brethren here salute you.

17. 18. 19.

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21. 22. 23.

May all the earth, Jews, and Gentiles, join in praise to that God, through whose goodness, the predictions of the prophets being all fulfilled, the world is blessed with the gospel of Christ.

24. 25. 26.
27.

1. Cenchrea was a village near Corinth.

15. In these verses the apostle, with an engaging condescension, enumerates these brethren by name; which must have been a very pleasing remembrance to them; tho to us, at this day, it is less interesting.

16. The *holy kiss* mentioned in this verse was a Jewish custom. It seems to have given early occasion of offence in the christian church; and was therefore laid aside.

25. The word *mystery*, which is used by the apostle in the 25th verse, is generally interpreted to mean, the *calling of the Gentiles*. I think the context requires a more *general* sense; and that the apostle rather means the *whole scheme of the christian religion*.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE FIRST AND SECOND

EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH was a city of Achaia, seated on that neck of land which joined Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece. Its situation, on two seas, was well adapted to commerce; and made it one of the wealthiest cities in the world. But wealth had the effect there; which it always has; and Corinth, as it increased in opulence, increased also in dissipation, and wickedness. To this great city however the labours of St. Paul were directed: and here, amidst all the profligacy, and corrupt manners of the place, he founded a christian church; and through his influence, drew over many converts to the truth. In completing this great work he continued at Corinth two years.

Three years after he left it, he wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, as it is generally supposed, from Ephesus; the greater part of which appears to be an answer to several questions, they had put to him.

The apostle first expresses his happiness in the general adherence of his converts to their religion, page: 427—he finds fault with their divisions: 428—gives them a plain idea of the gospel, opposed chiefly to the philosophy of the world: 428—vindicates his own mode of
o preaching

preaching it; and shews, that a knowledge of it's divine truths can never be attained without the assistance of the Spirit of God—and that divisions, and worldly ideas are wholly opposite to it: 430—touches on the life of an apostle, from which he infers his sincerity: 434—rebukes them on the account of an incestuous person, whom he excommunicates; giving them some instructions with regard to their heathen neighbours: 435—gives them rules with regard to their worldly disputes: 436—cautions them against the vices, and impurities, to which they had been formerly addicted: 437—The apostle proceeds next to answer several questions, that had been put to him. The first relates to marriage; particularly between christians, and heathens. The discussion of this question is contained in the seventh chapter.—In the three next chapters he answers a second question; Whether it be lawful for christians to eat meats offered to idols in an idol-temple? He first, in the eighth chapter, shews the inexpediency of it, as it may mislead weak christians. In the ninth, he gives an example in himself of many things, which he avoids as inexpedient. In the tenth he shews how an attachment to these idol-feasts had led the Jews formerly into sin: they *sat down to eat and drink*, at the sacrifices of idols; and then *rose up to play*; or to commit fornication. He then points out to his converts, that christians might in the same way be led from eating in idol-temples, to the practice of heathen abominations. At the fifteenth verse, the apostle uses a new argument, shewing the impropriety of eating in an idol-temple, as the sign of communicating with an idol, is the same as that of communicating with Christ; namely eating at his table.—The apostle concludes his argument with shewing, at the twenty-fifth verse, in what circumstances idol-meats may lawfully be eaten.—In the eleventh chapter, two points are discussed—the first relates to the behaviour of women in public assemblies:—the second, beginning at the seventeenth verse, to the improper celebration of the Lord's supper.—It appears from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters, that the chiefs of the Corinthian church were suffering emulation, and strife, and vying with each other, to creep in among their spiritual labours; and particularly that they were fond of displaying the gift of tongues. All these improprieties the apostle represses.—In the fifteenth chapter, he explains the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; on which subject many erroneous opinions had

had been entertained among the Corinthian converts.—In the last chapter, he gives instructions about their collections for the poor; and then concludes.

On the reading of this epistle at Corinth, the incestuous person was excommunicated; and many, from his example, were brought to a sense of their duty. Yet still the apostle found opposition. He had promised, after his journey to Macedonia, to visit Corinth: but finding the Corinthian converts still in such disorder, that he could not appear among them, without exerting more severity, than he chose; he postponed his journey. This occasioned new grounds of opposition. The apostle was represented as an unsteady man.—This was the state of the Corinthian church, when he wrote his second epistle, about a year after he had written the former. He introduces it with an account of the sufferings he had lately undergone; and of his sincerity in preaching the gospel: 463—he then gives the reason of his writing, instead of visiting them, as he had intended: 464—he forgives the incestuous person: 465—he professes his great affection for his converts: 465—dwells on the difficulty, and yet dignity, of preaching the gospel; the views, and hopes, and worldly distresses, that attend it: 466—of the universality of the gospel; and of the seeming contradictions, which are reconciled in it: 470—exhorts his converts to separate intirely from all heathen practices: 471—expresses his regard for the attention they paid to his last epistle: 472—reminds them to make collections for the poor; and gives them an account of the disciples he sends to them: 473—vindicates himself; and speaks of his own labours in the gospel, and of his power to punish his adversaries, if he pleased: 476—raises his character among them, by a recital of the visions he had had: 479—vindicates himself still farther; and concludes: 481.

FIRST EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

C H A P.
I.

PAUL, (by the particular appointment of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ,) together with Sosthenes; to the christian church at Corinth, and to all other christians—grace and peace from God in Christ!

Your happy conversion to the christian religion; and your having been so bountifully endowed with those gifts, through which your faith was at first confirmed, are among the chief subjects of my thankfulness to God. That communication, which you enjoy, of these divine blessings, is, I trust, sufficient to preserve you pure unto the great day of our Lord. Be faithful on your parts; and you may be assured of the acceptance of that God, who hath called you to salvation by his Son.

2. The expression, *all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ*, seems to point him out as an object of worship.

I i i 2

But

10. 11. But tho in general I thus commend you, I must at the same time reprove several of you for the various divisions, which, I hear, are subsisting among you; and which are very opposite to
12. the spirit of the gospel. You are dividing into different sects—one under Paul—another under Apollos—and a third under Peter.—
13. Do you then suppose there is any diversity in the religion of the gospel? Did Paul die for your sins? Or were you baptized in
14. 15. 16. his name? As this is the case, I am truly glad, that I baptized so few among you. Crispus, and Gaius, and the family of Stephanus, are all that I remember. So that there can be no pretence for saying, I baptized in my own name. For I was commissioned not so much to baptize; as to preach the gospel in simplicity, and truth.
- 17.
18. The simplicity of the cross indeed, which hath ever been my subject, tho it is the great foundation of all our hopes, is little understood by worldly men. To them the prophet alludes, when
19. he says; *Behold I will do a marvellous thing among this people. The wisdom of their wise men shall perish; and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*—To what end indeed does the philosophy, and wisdom of this world lead us? When it pretends
- 20.
21. to conduct us in religious matters, it is vanity, and folly. For

10. The apostle passes here without any interruption from commendation to blame. His sense is easy: but a modern ear requires some such connecting sentence, as I have here introduced.

12. Many commentators suppose the latter clause of the sentence, *and I of Christ*, is an interpolation. The sense is certainly better without it: for all the Corinthian converts, no doubt, listed *under Christ*; but held his doctrines under different leaders.—Mr. Markland, instead of Christus, would read Crispus.

19. Isa. xxix. 14.

21. This is the same sentiment, on which the apostle only dilated more, in the first chapter to the Romans.

after

after the world had, through ages, shewn it's weakness and ignorance in acquiring divine truth; it pleased God at once, through the simplicity of the gospel, to display his heavenly wisdom; and to offer salvation to all, who were disposed to receive it. But the wisdom of the world, as I observed, is little adapted to this divine knowledge. The unbelieving Jew views the Messiah only as a temporal prince; and the Greek listens merely to such instructions, as are decked with the refinements of philosophy: while the doctrine of the gospel, which lies in these few words, *Christ was crucified for sinners*, however offensive to both; will be found on just examination their truest wisdom. For simple as the great designs of Providence may appear; the utmost wisdom of man is feeble, when it presumes to judge of them.—And hence it is, that so few of the philosophers, and wise men of this world, have embraced the gospel; while through the goodness of God, it's great truths are open to men of plain understanding, of teachable minds, and good dispositions. And this is ordered in such a way, that all the serious part of mankind may know, that the hand of man hath had nothing to do in this great work; but that it was planned, and conducted solely by God.—You then, my brethren, giving up the wisdom of the world, have accepted, through God's goodness to you, the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and redemption of Christ; and shall be among

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23. 24.

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26. 27. 28.

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22. In the text it is, *the Jews require a sign*. In our Saviour's time they were always requiring a sign. And in the time of the apostles, it seems they were still making the same requisition. What kind of signs, they were now in quest of, their countryman Josephus tells us. False Christs, says he, deceived the people by promising them *σημεια ελευθεριας*, *the signs of deliverance from the Romans*.

24. The text perhaps applies the *power of God* to the Jews; and *the wisdom of God* to the Greeks.

27. 28. St. Paul's doctrine here, seems the same as in Luke viii. 15, *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest, and good heart, having, &c.*

31. Jer. ix. 23, 24.

those

CHAP.
II.
1. 2.

those, of whom the prophet speaks, *Let them that glory, glory in the Lord.*

For myself, I ever preached the gospel in it's true simplicity. All the arts of worldly wisdom I have disclaimed. *Jesus Christ, crucified for sinners*, has been my constant subject; and I have preached this among you, with all the tenderness, and anxiety, which a serious pastor will always feel. Instead of the arts of philosophy, I have enforced this great doctrine by the demonstration of the Spirit: and have shewn you, that your faith does not rest on any thing human; but on prophecy, and miracles, which are derived from God. The gospel is wisdom indeed; but of a different kind from the perishing wisdom of this world. Thohid through ages, it was determined from the beginning of the world. But even after it was opened, it escaped the discernment of the Jewish doctors; or they would never have crucified their Messiah.—But it is no wonder; for the divine truths it teaches, are conveyed to us in a manner wholly different from every kind of knowledge, which we receive through our senses—even by the Spirit of God, which alone can fathom his designs. As the spirit of a man only can search the secrets of his own heart; so

1. *Declaring unto you the testimony of God:* that is, the proof of religion from the prophecies of the Old Testament and from miracles.

2. The idea of a *crucified redeemer*, was the great stumbling-block. On it therefore, as the foundation-stone, the apostle lays the greatest stress. It is said to have given equal offence in China; and some authors relate, that the Jesuit missionaries there finding, how ill it was received, denied that Jesus Christ had been crucified; asserting it was an aspersions of the Jews. This charge against the Jesuits, whether true or not, Archb. Tillotson seems to have believed. See vol. III. p. 284.—The words, *καὶ τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον*, might be translated, *even that crucified person*.

9. This passage, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*, &c. is generally applied to the happiness of a future state. It is no doubt a noble description of that happiness, and very applicable to it; but the context here certainly affixes a different sense to it.—It is generally supposed to allude to Is. lxiv. 4. With regard to the difficulties attending this supposition, see Bp. Lowth's note on the passage.

nothing

nothing but God's own Spirit can explain the ways of his providence. This Spirit we have received. From it's influence, not from worldly science, our knowledge arises: and through it we explain the free grace of God—not in the terms of philosophy; but in the language of the Holy Ghost; shewing you, that the same divine Spirit, which spake by the holy prophets of old, now speaks in the gospel.—But mere unassisted reason could never discern these things. He only, who is assisted by God's Spirit, can discern them. The mere natural man, continually makes false judgments both of men, and things. For as the prophet says, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?* None surely, but whom the Lord hath instructed. So none can explain the will of God in Christ; but such as are under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

12. 13.

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16.

C H A P.

III.

1. 2.

But perhaps you may think, I have not opened to you, (as others have done) the sublimer doctrines of religion.—You are yet unable to bear them. As the new-born babe cannot be fed with strong food; but must at first, be sustained with milk; so have I been obliged to treat you. You have not yet attained the spirit of the gospel. These envyings, strifes, and party divisions among you, under Paul, and Apollos, plainly shew, that your conversion is

3. 4.

15. Solomon's sentiment is nearly the same, as the apostle's: *Evil men understand not judgment; but they that seek the Lord, understand all things.* Prov. xxviii. 5.

16. The apostle alludes here either to Isaiah xl. 13, or to Jerem. xxiii. 18.

3. 4. On reading these passages, we are immediately struck with the seeming impropriety of their having received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as we find they had; tho they had not yet attained the spirit of the gospel. I reconcile this matter by supposing, the apostle, in different parts of his epistles, addresses himself to different people. Or it might be, that people, who had attained these gifts, might fall away, and contract bad habits. We suppose nobody, in a state of trial, to be, at the same time, in a state of confirmed purity. Or what is perhaps still more probable, they might exercise their gifts, for the advantage of the church, even tho they had not attained the spirit of the gospel. Balaam exercised the functions of a prophet tho a bad man: and we are led to believe, from the tenor of the gospel, that Judas Iscariot wrought miracles, as well as the other apostles.

5. not yet compleat. Are Paul, and Apollos, think you, more than
 6. mere ministers of the gospel? I first planted it among you; and
 7. Apollos succeeded to my labours: but neither he nor I, are more
 8. than mere labourers under God; engaged in the same employment;
 9. 10. and equally accountable. We are all fellow-workmen: God is our
 master; and you are the land we cultivate: or, to use another
 11. allusion, you are the building which I have founded; the super-
 structure I leave to others. The foundation can be laid only in
 Christ. He who moveth that, engageth intirely in a new building.
 12. And as to the superstructure, whether it be good, or bad, let the
 13. workman awfully wait the issue of that great day, which shall bring
 14. his work to the test. If it be found suitable to the foundation; it
 15. is well: he will meet his reward. But if it be found the reverse,
 his work perishes; and he himself also, unless his good intentions
 may plead to save him.
16. Consider farther, that the christian church is now substituted in
 the room of the Jewish. *It* is now the temple of God. *Here*
 17. God's Holy Spirit rests, as it did *there*. Consider then the great
 danger of injuring the holy temple of God by your divisions; and
 reflect, that you yourselves are now the members, which constitute
 18. that holy temple. Be not then deceived by the wisdom of this

9. Συεργοι Θεοι, rather *fellow-labourers of God's*; than, as it is translated, *labourers together with God*.

13. This is very coldly translated. It should not be *the day*; but *that day*; or *the great day*.—*Fire* seems to be considered in this passage, not in allusion to any great, eternal fire: but merely as a test. As fire is the test of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: so the great day will be the test of every man's work.

15. St. Jude (ver. 23) uses the same metaphor: *Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*.

17. The word φθειρεται in this verse is repeated; and is translated first *defiled*, and afterwards *destroyed*; both which senses it will bear: but to preserve the figure, it should be confined to one. The idea seems to be, that christians, as a body, composed the temple of God. Divisions among them is a disunion of the parts of the temple. The consequence is, the destruction of the whole.

world

world. He who would rest his knowledge, on that foundation, which I have described, must be contented to unlearn much of what he knows, before he arrive at the simplicity of the gospel; in comparison of which the wisdom of this world is folly. For *the wise*, as we are told, *are taken in their own craftiness*; and again *the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*.—Let there be an end therefore of all boasting, and glorying in this, or that leader. You have higher aims; all your instructors in religion; all your possessions in this world, and hopes in the next, should lead you only to one great point—that holy connection, which you have with Christ; and through him, with God.

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23.

Even we, who are the appointed apostles of the gospel, look upon ourselves in no higher light, than as the stewards of our blessed Lord. For myself, if I be found faithful in my office, it is all I desire. As to the censures passed on me by others, they have little weight with me. I am more inclined to join them in censuring myself. For tho I am not conscious of having neglected my apostolic trust; yet my own sentiments are no justification of my actions.—Let us not then be forward in passing censures on each other: but leave all judgment to that time, when a very different light shall be thrown on the characters of men, from any they now receive: when the motives of our actions shall be examined, and every man's real deserts appear in the sight of God.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2.

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19. See Job v. 13, and Ps. xciv. 11.

22. With what elevation of faith does the apostle here consider *death* among the *possessions* of a christian!

23. It is very strong in the original: *Th are Christ's; and Christ is God's*.

4. Οὐδὲν ἑμαυτῷ συνιδα signifies rather *I am not conscious*; than as it is translated, *I know nothing by myself*.

6. Thus I have said what I wish to say to you on your several divisions, and the consequences of them. I have not mentioned names; but have substituted my own, and those of Apollos, and Peter; that I might not too openly point at any one; and that your party-leaders may reflect, that if *we* disclaim any separate authority; much more should *they*. Let them humble themselves therefore; and consider the gifts they have received, as given them by God. Sincerely do I wish those high pretensions of yours were founded in truth; and that I might change my anxious, suffering state for your secure, and happy one. Look at us the apostles of Christ. Who can see us in any other light, than as spectacles prepared for the ridicule, and cruelty of the world? While we are fools in the general estimation of men; you join worldly prudence, and the cross together: while we are weak; you are strong: while you are honoured; we are despised. Examine the life of an apostle. See the distresses of all kinds, to which we are exposed—even to the want of the very necessities of life, which we endeavour to supply with the labour of our hands: bearing the many indignities we receive, not only with patience; but with a disposition to return good for evil.—I mention not however these things to distress you: but to revive in you that tenderness, which is due from children to a parent. I was the first, who opened the gospel to you: and have certainly the first claim to your attention.—And that you may be fully confirmed in that faith, which I once delivered unto you, and preach in all the churches, I send my beloved Timothy unto you, with this epistle; who is, in all respects, a faithful

6. I have endeavoured to pursue the connection here as well as I could, tho the text is somewhat obscure. As to the sentence beginning with *and*; that copulative is frequent, when it is merely an expletive.

8. *Reigning as kings* seems to refer to the influence these leaders had obtained over the people.

minister of our blessed Lord. My thus sending a substitute may contribute to excite divisions still more among you, on a supposition, that I mean not to come myself. But be assured, I do mean to come myself; and shall examine, not the philosophy, and worldly wisdom—but the gospel-spirit, and temper, of such as oppose us. For it is not the learning of men; but the fruits of the Spirit, that make the true christian.—You have an option therefore, whether I shall come among you with the mildness of a father; or with the power of an apostle.

18.

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21.

CHAP.
V.
1.

Having thus censured your various divisions, I shall now censure you still more on another head. I hear there hath been practised among you a very enormous kind of wickedness; and what is not heard of even among Gentiles—that one of you hath had a connection with his father's wife; and that others, instead of making it a general cause of mourning, and separating themselves from so vile a person; seem rather to defend him in his wickedness.—Tho absent, I take upon me, through the authority of the Holy Ghost, to decide in this matter. I command therefore, that, on the receipt of this epistle, you gather the congregation together; and in the name of Jesus Christ, solemnly expel this person from your communion; that he may see the heinousness of his sin, and after a sincere repentance be restored to God's favour.—As for

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6.

21. The expression, *shall I come unto you with a rod*, is supposed to allude to the exertion of those extraordinary apostolic powers, which were sometimes exercised; as in the death of Ananias, and Sapphira.

1. It appears from many passages of St. Paul's epistles, that the lusts of the flesh (so much practised among the heathen) were among those, on which the purity of the gospel precepts had least effect. At Corinth in particular, the manners of the people were so corrupted, that *καταδιαξεν*, was a vulgar expression for leading a loose irregular life. Yet still incest was seldom heard of among the heathen. Cicero somewhere calls it, *scelus incredibile, et inauditum*.

7. 8. your defending him in his wickedness, it is an immediate step towards being corrupted yourselves. You are under a necessity therefore on your own account to remove this pernicious example. Consider your blessed Saviour's death, and preserve yourselves as free as possible from sin, which was the cause of it.

9. But tho I have thus given you strict injunctions not to communicate with any person, whose life is notoriously stained with
10. 11. impurities; yet I must restrict what I say, to your own community: for as to your heathen neighbours, many of whose lives are thus stained, it is impossible for you intirely to avoid an intercourse
12. 13. with them. We must leave them therefore to the judgment of God. But over our own brethren we may exercise more strictness.—I command you therefore once more to excommunicate this wicked person.

CHAP.
VI.

1.

Let me now add another injunction. I greatly disapprove your carrying disputes before heathen magistrates; and would have you always decide them among themselves. You have heard what
2. 3. our blessed Saviour hath said with regard to his saints judging the world. If such honour be assigned them, are they not fit, think you, to determine the trifling things of this world? In
4. such matters I should suppose, that even the meanest member of

7. *Purge out therefore the old leaven.* St. Paul, in this passage, alludes to a custom prescribed by the Jewish law (see Deut. xvi. 4) of cleansing their houses from leaven, before the celebration of the passover.

9. The word *εγγιστα* here, is thought by many not to refer to any past letter; but to the present one. St. Chrysostom particularly interprets it thus.

2. See a note on Matt. xix. 18, in which I suppose this expression with regard to judging the world, is figurative. This however hinders not, why St. Paul might not allude to it, as an enforcement of his argument. That the expression is figurative, seems plain; because otherwise the apostle's argument requires us to suppose that these Corinthian converts themselves, as well as the apostles, were to judge the world: *If the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*

a christian

a christian church might be a sufficient judge. How shameful therefore is it, that even the wisest among you is not able to decide a trifling controversy; but that christians, who ought to give an example of mildness, forbearance, and gentleness to others, should not only quarrel among themselves; but even carry their disputes before heathen judicatories. You must surely see how contrary this is to real christianity; and that if you fulfilled your profession, you ought rather to suffer an injury, than by such means to redress it.

But I fear there is great wrongness of practice among you; and together with the impurities, of which I have just been speaking; there are excesses of another kind—covetousness, extortion, and dishonesty, which equally exclude you from all hopes of inheriting the blessings of the gospel. Once, no doubt, many of you were deeply immersed in all these vices: but you should consider, that you have been called to a state of holiness—and that you have been baptized, and sanctified through the Holy Spirit.—Preserve yourselves therefore in that purity; and particularly with regard to abstaining from the lusts of the flesh, use such means, as are most conducive to this end. Many things are useful in the degree; but ruinous in the excess; especially if they have any tendency to enslave the mind. A temperate use of food is highly necessary; which, you should always remember, is designed merely for the ends, and purposes of this life.—The natural dignity of the human body also, which is created for the Lord, places the guilt of impure affections in a strong light. The same God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, will raise us up also.—We should farther consider ourselves as the members of Christ.

12. The connection here is rather difficult. There is not wanting however the authority of commentators for that connection, which I have offered.

18. 19. Shall we then pollute the members of Christ with deeds of uncleanness?—We should even consider our bodies as the temples of the Holy Ghost. Let us not then, by polluting them,
 20. pollute those temples.—Lastly, we should consider ourselves, as redeemed, and bought with a price. Let us then, in body
 C H A P. and spirit, glorify that God, to whom we belong.
 VII.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. I shall proceed now to answer the several questions, you have proposed.—The first relates to marriage; which, in the present state of the church, I should not greatly encourage. To prevent however such impurities, as are practised among the heathen, every
 6. 7. 8. 9. one ought to be left at perfect liberty in this matter. I give you however my own private opinion in advising that restraint, which
 10. 11. I practise myself.—But with regard to a marriage once entered into, it is the plain command of our blessed Lord, that there shall be no separation, except for the cause of adultery. If any separation take place on slighter causes, and either party marry again, such a marriage is adultery.

12. 13. 14. But in this new question, which you have put to me, and on
 15. 16. which our Lord hath not given you his injunctions, I will give you mine. In a marriage between a christian, and a heathen, if the heathen party wish to continue the union, there ought to

1. This chapter seems to relate to questions asked by some converts, who had been bred up with an idea of the lawfulness of fornication; and who little understood the nature of the marriage contract. As it respects chiefly the circumstances of the Corinthian church; and particularly marriage contracts between christians, and heathen, I have contented myself with preserving the apostle's general argument.—His restriction of marriage, was certainly meant only as a temporary caution; (see ver. 26) for St. Paul is otherwise an advocate for marriage; and considers *forbidding to marry*, as one of the signs of heresy.

15. But tho a separation may take place, I presume the apostle does not authorize a *second marriage*. The reason of the separation seems to be, lest the man, or woman, being carried among their heathen relations, should be seduced from their religion

be no objection on the other side: for the religious sentiments of the christian may draw over the heathen. Besides, such union affords the best hope of bringing up your children in the christian faith. If however, on this religious difference, a separation be chosen by the heathen party, let it take place. Religion is certainly a much more sacred tie, than marriage. Only let every thing of this kind be accompanied with mildness, and tenderness.

And here let me remind you of what I have earnestly taught in all places, where I have planted the gospel; that the christian religion is intended to make no change in the civil rights, or outward circumstances of men.—The Jew, and the heathen are equally called: the circumcision of one, and the uncircumcision of the other, make no difference.—The master and the slave are equally called: the bondage of the one, and the freedom of the other, make no difference. If however the slave can have his liberty, let him accept it. But even a state of bondage may be endured on christian principles: the master should esteem himself Christ's bondman, and the slave should consider himself as Christ's freedman. Whatever your outward circumstances of life may be; you are all equally bought with a price; and all equally belong to Christ.

17. 18. 19.
20. 21. 22.
23. 24.

You will consider therefore (to return to my subject) that I only mean to discourage marriage among you, on account of the expediency of it, during the present distressed state of the church; and

25. 26. 27.
28.

23. *You are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men.* The apostle's argument is, *You are bought with a still higher price than your earthly master paid for you; consider yourselves therefore rather as the servants of your heavenly, than of your earthly master.*

25. Most interpreters make this paragraph the beginning of a new subject. To me it appears with most force as a repetition of what the apostle had said in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this chapter; with a view to sum up the whole argument, from the consideration of the instability of human things. The eight verses therefore, from the 17th, to the 25th, are a digression, addressed to a prevailing opinion among the Jews, that the christian religion dissolved other civil ties, as well as heathen marriages.

that

- that what I have said on that subject, is merely from myself, without any express command from the Lord. Let no man conceive me to suppose any sinfulness in the married state: all I say, is, that the times forbode much trouble, and affliction; and on that account
29. 30. 31. I speak merely to your discretion, not to your consciences. The ties, the relations, the joys, the sorrows, the riches, the poverty, the
32. 33. 34. whole fashion of this world, will soon be over. But during this persecuted state of the church, a married life must occasion additional distraction; and will make it a much greater difficulty, both to
35. the man, and the woman, to attend the affairs of religion.—If however this abstinence engage any of you in greater difficulties, and temptations, than it removes, my argument at once ceases.
36. 37. 38. Under these rules also let the parents, and guardians of young women act; who cannot so well, in these cases, act for themselves. If they, who are thus intrusted, see a proper reason for giving their daughters, or wards, in marriage, let them do it: there is certainly no sin in the case. If no such reason appear, they will do better at this time, not to incourage these connections.
39. 40. Lastly, with regard to second marriages, the rule still holds. There is certainly no sin in a second marriage, if the first be dissolved by death. But, as in the former case, and for the same reasons I give my advice against it.—It is true, I speak only my own private judgment in this case; but I think I may be considered as acting under a superior direction to that of a common adviser.

29. Some think the passage, contained in the three or four following verses, was written in the spirit of prophecy. The persecution of Nero soon succeeded. I rather suppose the apostle's meaning comprehends the general *persecuted state* of the church, of which our Saviour had given his disciples sufficient warning.

39. The expression *only in the Lord* is explained by almost all commentators, as a prohibition to marry a heathen. I cannot say, it conveys more to me, than that in marriage, as in every thing else, we should act under a sense of religion.

I come

I come now to your next question, *Whether it be lawful for a christian to eat meats offered to an idol, in an idol temple?*—With regard to this matter, I doubt not but you are all ready to profess your religious knowledge; not perhaps enough considering, that charity is the soul of religion—that confidence proceeds from ignorance—and that true religion has no foundation but the love of God, and his commandments.—I doubt not however, but you will all be ready to profess, that you know an idol is nothing—that notwithstanding the diversity of gods, which are worshipped around you, you believe only in one God, who made the world; and in one redeemer, Jesus Christ.—At the same time, I know well, this established faith is not universal among you. There are some, who to this very day have their heathen prejudices so far about them, as to partake of meats offered to idols in a religious sense; thus mixing christianity, and idolatry together.

It is very true, that eating *food of any kind*, is an indifferent matter in the sight of God. But it is by no means an indifferent matter to *mislead a weak brother*. Even suppose it were *allowable* for a *well informed christian* to eat meat sacrificed in an idol-temple; is there no offence, think you, in encouraging by your practice the doubts of others, who have less knowledge than you have? Is there no offence in contradicting the whole scheme of your redemption by leading your brother into sin, from which Christ died to

1. Partaking of the sacrifices of a heathen temple was a practice so convenient to the poor; and so agreeable from its festivity, to the rich; that it was not easily relinquished. Many of the heathen converts conceived, that as they had no belief in idols, they might partake innocently of these sacrifices.—I add the expression, *in an idol-temple*, because that certainly was the apostle's meaning, as appears from the tenth verse. With regard to the mere meats themselves, he speaks afterwards. See ch. x. 25.

3. Εγνωται is here used (as St. Paul often uses Greek words) in a Hebrew signification. It does not signify, *is known of him*: but, *is made to know him*.

12. redeem him? While you thus mislead your brethren you sin against
 13. Christ.—Let it then be your fixed resolution, that, as eating meat in an idol-temple may draw your brother into sin, you will never again allow yourself in that practice.

CHAP.

IX.

1. 2. 3.

What I have said above against eating meat in an idol-temple proceeds chiefly upon the inexpediency of it. I might strengthen what I have said by my own practice in similar matters. You acknowledge me, for instance, to be an apostle; and if I am not such to others, at least I am to you. I have a right therefore to my maintenance among you. I have a right also to the maintenance of my family, if I chose to have one, as well as Peter, and other apostles. And this I claim on the principles of *nature*—the precepts of the *law*—and the commands of the *gospel*.—But you see, I wave this right; nor would I, on any account, accept a gratuity from you. It is the only little matter of glorying I have, that I preach the gospel to you without expence. To preach the gospel to you, I am obliged: but that I give up my own advantages, and rights for your sake, is my boast.

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 7.
 8. 9. 10. 11.
 12. 13. 14.
 15.

16. 17. 18.

1. The apostle is thought by some to speak, in this chapter, to another question; and at the tenth chapter to resume the argument about idol-meats. I own I list with those interpreters, who consider this chapter as a part of the same argument; and indeed St. Paul at the 23d verse of the tenth chapter, seems to draw it to this conclusion: *Even as I please all men in all things not seeking mine own profit: but the profit of many that they may be saved.* That the argument may appear with more force, I have drawn the heads of it together by abridging, rather than dilating it.

2. He was an apostle particularly to them, because he established the church of Corinth. They were, in fact, as he says, the *seed of his apostleship*.

5. Some commentators conceive the ἀδελφῶν γυναῖκα of the original to be some attendant female. In those days, tho there were inns, there was no accommodation; so that if travellers did not carry people about with them to dress their viſuals, they must suffer inconveniences. But the sense I have given, seems the most probable, because of the particular mention of Peter, whom we know to have been a married man. See Matt. viii. 14, and Luke iv. 38.

10. *He that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope.* This passage seems corrupt. In the Alexandrian, and other copies, it is read, ο αλῶν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τε μετεχειν: *he that thresheth, doth it in hope of partaking.*

For

For the same reason, that I wave this right, I wave a number of others, for the benefit of those, to whom I preach. As far as I can with a safe conscience, I become a Jew to the Jews; and a Gentile to the Gentiles. I put on infirmities with the weak; and become all things to all men, that I may gain the more; submitting thus to many inconveniences for the sake of the gospel.—Consider again what self-denials even the candidates in your public games undergo. What ease, what comfort do they give up, for the sake of worldly glory?—Let us then so far follow their example; suffering many inconveniences, that we may procure happiness to others, and secure it to ourselves.

Let me place this matter before you in another light; and urge you with the example of the ancient Israelites. They were governed by a divine dispensation—they were led by a pillar of fire—they passed through the red sea—they eat bread from heaven—and drank water, by a miracle from a rock. And yet, favoured as they were, they incurred God's displeasure; as you certainly will also, tho

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20. 21.
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24. 25. 26.
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CHAP.
X.
1. 2.
3. 4.
5.

25. This is much the same doctrine, which our Saviour inculcates in the parable of the unjust steward (Luke xvi. 8) *The children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light.*

2. The text says, *They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.* This is an expression obscurely figurative. I know not what sense to affix to it, but that as we accept Christ as our lawgiver, through the miracles he wrought; so the Jews accepted Moses.

4. The text says, *They drank of that rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ*—that is, it was an emblem of Christ; which was carried along with them. The metonymy of a rock for the water of the rock, is easy. And the word *ακολουθουσης* as easily admits the sense of *being carried with them.* Ælian exactly uses it in this sense, where he says, that Xerxes carried water with him, drawn from the river Choaspes, which was the only water the kings of Persia drank, (*υδωρ ηκολουθει Ξερξην*) Hist. l. XII. c. 40.—Others are of opinion, that the stream, which Moses struck from the rock, formed itself into a rivulet, and accompanied the Israelites in their passage through the desert. For the sake of this advantage, they would naturally keep in that track, or road, through which it led them.

6. 7. 8. 9. favoured like them, if you follow their bad example; and give
10. 11. yourselves up to improper indulgences. By frequenting idol-temple,
however innocent you may think it, and eating things offered to idols,
you may fall by degrees into those vile practices, which occasioned
12. 13. 14. the destruction of the Israelites; and will also occasion yours.—Be
not then too secure from being in covenant with God. Humbly
endeavour to avoid temptations, instead of running into them by
these idolatrous practices; and God's grace will help you to over-
come the seductions of wicked men, and all other temptations,
which unavoidably surround you.
15. Let me place this matter before you in a still stronger light;
hoping that your own reason will see the force of what I say.—
16. 17. In the institution of the Holy Sacrament, what is held out, think
you, among christians by their partaking of the *same bread*, and
the *same cup*, but that communion, which we all profess to hold,
1. both among ourselves, and with Christ?—Thus too in the Jewish
church, all, who eat at the same altar, profess themselves to be
19. 20. of the same communion.—Just so likewise, they, who partake
of sacrifices in an idol-temple, give an open declaration surely that
21. they hold communion with idolaters. And would you throw such
an imputation as this, on yourselves, and on the holy religion
you profess?—Provoke not then God with these practices; nor enter
22. into contest with the Almighty.—It is no excuse to say, that you
23. pay no respect to the idol; nor eat the offerings made to it through
a religious motive. It is a great evil, if you injure religion by
24. giving offence to others. Every man owes a debt to those around
him: nor is it enough to consult his own good meanings: he

11. On whom the ends of the world are come—that is, to whom God's last dispensation, the christian religion, has been revealed. The Jews reckoned three ages—the first before Moses—the second after him—and the third after the Messiah.

should take care also, that those meanings be not misinterpreted by others.

Thus I have given you my opinion at large, with regard to 25.
eating meats offered to idols, in an idol temple; which I totally dis-
 approve.—With regard however to the *meats themselves*, I am
 no way scrupulous. They are often, I know, sold in the markets;
 and I have no objection to your purchasing *them*, or *any* meats
 there, without asking a question: for even idol-meats, when thus 26.
 reduced to common use, rank again among the other good crea-
 tures of God.—Or, if any of you eat with a heathen neighbour;
 refuse nothing, that is set before you, on any religious scruple. 27.
 But if any man inform you, that this, or that kind of meat hath 28. 29. 30.
 been offered to an idol, by no means eat; lest you lead him by
 your example to do what is contrary to his conscience. In other
 respects, if you eat with thanksgiving, there is no objection.—
 Let it be your first great rule, to devote yourselves, and the com-
 monest actions of your lives, to the glory of God: and let it
 come in as a second rule to give no offence to man. This hath
 ever been my study: and as far as I imitate Christ, do you imitate
 me. 31.
32.
33.
CHAP.
XI.
1.

25. As a great part of the sacrifices were given away, it was customary for the poorer people to carry their share to the market.

27. It was common also among the richer, to carry their shares home for family uses.

28. The expression, *for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof* (taken from Ps. xxiv. 1.) is given as a reason both for *eating*, and for *not eating*. It is *a reason for eating*, where your conscience is not concerned, because all food, in reality belongeth not to the idol; but to the Lord, from whom we receive it. And indeed this is the reason, for which it is sanctified by thanksgiving, because then we acknowledge not the idol; but the Lord for the giver. Again, it is a reason for *not eating*; because, where your conscience is concerned, the creation produces food sufficient, without using any prohibited species.—Many however think the repetition of these words disturbs the sense so much, that they are glad to avail themselves of the Alexandrian copy, and other copies, in which they are not repeated

I come

2. 3. I come now to your next question; *Whether women assisting in the prayers, and hymns of the church, should keep their veils on?*—But before I discuss this point, let me tell you, it is a great pleasure to me, that I am able to commend your observance of those *other rules of decency* in your public assemblies, which I have already given you.

4. 5. 6. 7. With regard then to your question, I would have that appearance of regularity, and subordination observed, which God hath appointed in every thing. A man's appearing in a public assembly uncovered; and a woman's appearing veiled, are considered as the
8. 9. usual signs of superiority, and subjection. As such therefore I injoin them; and would have that natural, and modest subordination take place, which was first pointed out, at the creation
10. of man.—I may add also, that there will ever be people at hand, among

7. The veil was worn in token of subjection. See Gen. xxiv. 65. So late in the history of mankind, as in the time of the Romans, the veil was considered in the same light. Valerius Maximus (l. VI. c. 3.) speaks of the great harshness of Sulpicius in repudiating his wife, because she appeared in public without a veil. The word *nupta* properly signifies *one covered with a veil*.

10. For this cause, says the text, *ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels*. This is confessedly a very difficult expression; and many strange interpretations have been given of it. The expression, *power on her head*, is not very difficult. Almost all interpreters agree in supposing it to signify, *having her head veiled to denote her inferiority*.—The difficulty lies in the reason given for her having her head veiled—*because of the angels*.

For one of the most *ingenious* explanations of this matter, we are indebted to Dr. Jeremy Taylor, who supposes (Liberty of proph. sect. III.) that *αγγελοι* hath been the mistake of some transcriber for *αγγελος*; and then the sense is, that women ought to wear veils in churches, *because of the assemblies of men there present*.

But the interpretation I have given, which is authorized by some of the most learned commentators, is, I think, the best. For this interpretation we give the following reasons.

In the first place, it is certain, that unbelievers did come in, as spies in christian assemblies. See 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24, 25. And particularly Galat. ii. 4.

In

among the enemies of religion as spies upon you, to observe, and mark any impropriety, or indecency in your behaviour.—What I say however on this subject must not be understood as countenancing any undue authority in the man; or any slavish subjection in the woman: for men and women were created for each other; and for their mutual comfort, and assistance.

But besides it's betokening a proper subordination, there is a *natural decency* in a woman's appearing veiled in a public assembly. Even the long hair, which nature hath given her, evidently shews the intention of nature: and you would all see an impropriety, if the sexes should change the usual distinction; if the man should wear his hair long; while the woman should wear hers short.—After all I have said, if any are still unconvinced, I have only to add, that the practice, I have here prescribed to you, is the practice of all the christian churches I am acquainted with.

I come now to a point, in which there is great cause for finding fault—I mean the irregularity, that attends your assemblies at the celebration of the Lord's supper.—In the first place, I hear there are great divisions among you, on this subject, and party-

In the second place, the word *αγγελος* which literally signifies a *messenger*, as well as an *angel*, is sometimes also used to denote a *spy*. Thus in James ii. 25, *υποδιξαμηνι της αγγελος* she received the *messengers*; which *messengers*, we know were *spies*; and were the *very same persons*, whom St. Paul (Heb. xi. 31) calls by their proper name, *κατασκοποι*, *spies*.

In the septuagint also, the word *αγγελος* is used in this sense.

It is happy however, that this very difficult text is of no great consequence to us. These injunctions of St. Paul with regard to women, must be considered as *local* only; alluding to customs then prevailing at Corinth. All the instruction, that we are to draw from them is, that every thing in our religious assemblies, should be conducted with regularity, order, and subordination.

15. Some commentators think the apostle's interdiction of dishevelled hair, and his injunction to wear veils, was to obviate all similitude between christian women, and heathen priestesses,

distinctions;

19. distinctions; which I rather believe. Such indeed is the constitution of this world, that there always must be a difference of opinion among men; which will act as a kind of test of their wisdom, and prudence.—But here is an evident fault, not merely
20. in matters of opinion, but in practice. Indeed, my brethren, your general manner of assembling is very far from the simple institution of our Lord. You make a *common contribution* of food in your love-feasts, it is true: but how is it disposed of? The richer form into parties; and taking their own provisions, eat and drink to excess: while the poorer, instead of finding comfort from the abundance of their richer neighbours, are left to starve. This
22. is turning the church of God into an eating-house; and the sacrament into a riotous meal; and calls for a very severe reprehension.
23. 24. In opposition to this, consider the simple institution of the Holy Sacrament, as enjoined by our Lord; and as you have been taught by me. Sitting with his disciples at the paschal supper, that night, in which he was betrayed, the holy Jesus took bread, and blessing it, brake, and gave it among them, bidding them eat it, in remembrance of his body, that was broken for them. In
25. the same manner he distributed the cup in remembrance of his
26. blood, that was shed: and instituted this plain, easy rite to be a *visible record*, as it were, through all ages, of his meritorious death.
27. It is a great profanation therefore of this sacred rite, to celebrate it in the riotous assemblies, I have been just describing.

21. I take it for granted, that the apostle alludes here to what were called love-feasts; as we read of no other occasion, on which they contributed to a common-meal.

26. *Ye shew forth the Lord's death.* This seems to allude to the *Haggadah*, or *shewing forth*, in the *passover*. Some youth was appointed to ask the reason of the rite? Then some grave person present was appointed to *shew it forth*.

Examine

Examine then the purposes for which it was instituted; and judge from thence of the temper, and behaviour, with which you ought to receive it. For you may be assured, that this unworthy manner of receiving it will, in some shape or other, provoke God's indignation against you. Let those therefore who have not yet felt the hand of God, prevent it by looking into their own behaviour; and let those, who now lie under God's judgments, consider them as the providential means of their restoration to his favour. Let every circumstance of decency and order attend this solemn institution: but for the future, let no common meal accompany it.—Other things with regard to this point, I will give orders about, when I visit you.

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CHAP.
XII.

1.

Your next question with regard to *spiritual endowments*, leads me into a longer inquiry. I shall endeavour to explain it fully to you.—

28. An excellent rule, something like this, is given Eccles. xviii. 23. *Before thou prayest, prepare thyself.*

30. The apostle mentions the infliction of diseases, and death. These temporal punishments seem to have been inflicted, tho uncommonly, in the early church; but we must always consider them as inflicted by God. The apostles were only God's instruments.—Some indeed suppose the apostle is describing here only the common effects of intemperance.

31. I explain *διακρισις* by the expression, *looking into their own behaviour*. *Διακρισις* does not signify *to judge*; but *to examine*,

32. *Chastened*, is a good translation of *παιδεύομεθα*, which signifies properly *to be corrected, as children*.

34. This verse appears to be the prohibition not only of the *irregularity* of love-feasts, but of *love-feasts themselves*. They certainly began early to be very disorderly assemblies; and were early abolished. Traces of them may be found later in the church: but this does not disprove the apostle's prohibition of them at Corinth, where they had arisen to so great a height of disorder.

1. These were the several powers, which it pleased God to commit to the early christians for the propagation of the gospel. In the practice of a good life, we are every where assured that the Holy Spirit of God will assist our pious endeavours. But the apostle here speaks of those special gifts, which were intrusted to the first christians; and which ceased after the first age. The exact knowledge therefore of this question, is of less concern to us.

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2. In the first place, that you may not be exalted with these spiritual endowments, remember how lately you were all sunk in the impurities of idolatry.—Let me next remind you, that as these endowments were given by the Spirit of God, merely to support that gospel which through it was revealed, they all issue from the same source; and are so far on an equality. There ought therefore to be no
4. 5. 6. 7. contest among you about pre-eminence. Be assured, that whatever gifts or endowments of any kind, you are possessed of, notwithstanding their variety,—supernatural knowledge, and wisdom—
8. eminent degrees of faith—a power of working miracles—the gift
9. 10. of prophecy—the ability of detecting falsehood—speaking in different languages—all proceed from the same Spirit, who distributes
11. them severally to each as He pleases. The church of Christ therefore,
12. like the human body, is made up of various members. Be they
13. Jews, or Gentiles, bound, or free, yet after they are baptized into the christian profession, they become all united by the same Spirit;
14. 15. 16. as the natural body is by the same soul. So that when christians, possessing various gifts, have any animosity in point of pre-eminence, it is, as if the hand, or the foot, or any other member, should take
17. 18. offence at the rest. All are necessary—all contribute to the general
19. good of the whole—without any one of them, the body would be
20. 21. imperfect: while their union makes it compleat. No one part can
22. 23. 24. say of any other, that it is unnecessary. Even the weakest, and
25. 26. least distinguished parts, as well as the nobler, have their use. So that the body, and it's members being all at union, no part can suffer without injury to the rest; nor can any part enjoy ease, unless the rest partake of it.
27. 28. 29. Under this comparison I would have you consider the church of
30. 31. Christ, consisting of apostles, prophets, teachers, and all it's other

3. For the interpretation of this verse, I am chiefly indebted to Mr. Lock.

27. Σωμα Χριστοῦ, καὶ μέλη ἐκ μερῶν; : *You are, in some sort, the body and members of Christ.*

members,

members, composing one uniform, and connected whole. Without this subordination no society can exist: and tho all cannot attain the highest endowments: yet let all desire them earnestly, and endeavour to deserve them. By emulating each other, as you do, you certainly shew you have not yet attained, what is beyond them all, a right idea of christian love. Tho a person were possessed of every spiritual attainment—tho he could speak the language of angels—tho he were endowed with the gift of prophecy—tho he understood the whole mystery of the redemption of man—and was actuated by a faith that could work the greatest miracles,—tho his *actions* were as splendid as his *endowments*—tho he gave his whole possessions to the poor; and submitted his body even to martyrdom itself—yet still, if these endowments, and these actions, can be supposed to exist without christian love, they would be of no avail.

C H A P.
XIII.
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He, whose heart is warmed by this principle, is gentle, and kind to all. He is free from envy, pride, and vanity. No improper behaviour is seen in him. He never seeks his own private advantage, when it interferes with the good of others. He is patient of injury; and the last to put an unfavourable construction on the meanings of others. Nothing that hurts another, gives pleasure to him. Nothing, but what, in some respect serves the interest of religion, gives him real joy. His life is a constant course of opposition to his bad inclinations. He bears with the humours of those he converses with; seeking to hide, rather than expose them. He allows not himself to believe the slanders, which he hears—and preserves his good opinion of others, as long as he possibly can.—Consider also, that as christian love *excels* all spiritual attainments, it *outlasts* them also. Prophecies shall be fulfilled—languages shall become unnecessary—and spiritual knowledge (here so imperfect) shall vanish in it's future completion: but love shall continue with us to all eternity. In the present life, as we advance in years, and become

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more

12. 13. more informed, our views are continually changing. In the same way, when we compare this world with the next, we may be said here to see only through faith, and hope. But hereafter, when we shall be removed to perfect vision, the objects of faith and hope being obtained, we shall still find love, the great source of all our future enjoyments.

CHAP.
XIV.

1. 2. As far then, as you act under the influence of this great principle, you may desire spiritual gifts: but I should wish you chiefly to expound, and instruct. For he, who speaketh in an unknown tongue, may
3. speak indeed to God; but speaks to no purpose to his hearers: while
4. he who plainly expounds scripture; edifies, exhorts, and comforts
5. all, who hear him; and spreads knowledge abroad in the church. For myself, I rejoice in every gift, you possess; particularly in the power given you of speaking languages. At the same time, I must say, that unless he, who speaks in an unknown language, interpret
6. also; the expounder is certainly the more useful speaker. If I neither make the revelation, nor the doctrine intelligible; what
7. 8. end does my speaking answer? If the trumpet, gives no distinction
9. of sound, how shall the soldier be directed? Just so, if your discourse is no address to the understanding, what is its effect? God
10. hath given the blessing of languages to mankind to communicate
11. their sentiments: without this use, language is nothing. Let me
12. 13. then repeat what I said before, that as you are zealous of your spiritual gifts, I would have you make them answer the great purpose, for which they were intended—the edification of the church. Let none of you therefore speak in an unknown tongue; unless what he says, is interpreted either by himself, or others.

6. The apostle uses four words, *revelation*, *knowledge*, *prophecy*, and *doctrine*. We may not perhaps be able with sufficient accuracy to distinguish the precise meaning of each: it is enough however for our purpose at present, that the apostle's general meaning is, that in whatever way we endeavour to instruct, it is to no purpose, unless we make our meaning intelligible.

The

The same rule holds equally in public prayer, as in preaching. 14.
 If I pray in an unknown tongue, my own devotion may be pure ;
 but I cannot lead the devotion of others. All prayers therefore, 15.
 and spiritual hymns, should not only be devout ; but addressed to
 the understanding also. Otherwise, tho your prayers in themselves 16. 17.
 may be excellent, it is impossible that the congregation can unite in
 them.—For myself, tho the gift of tongues is imparted to me in 18. 19.
 full measure, my chief employment hath been expounding.—Be
 not then carried away, like children, by novelties : but like men 20.
 use your understanding ; and consider the end, for which the gift
 of tongues was imparted. You remember the early prediction of 21.
 this great gift, *With other tongues, and other lips, will I speak unto*
this people ; and yet they will not hear. To speak in an unknown 22.
 tongue therefore, you see, may be a miracle, to *convert unbelievers.*
 But to those, who *believe*, expounding is the proper application.
 Unknown languages used incautiously, will discredit religion, instead 23-
 of aiding it. What, think you, would an unbeliever suppose, if
 he should enter your assemblies, and find a person talking to the
 congregation in a language, which none of them understood ? This
 would rather make him suppose, you were mad, than inspired.
 But if he should hear any of your teachers *expounding* ; a different 24-
 effect might then be expected. He might see his error ; his con- 25.
 science might take alarm ; and falling down on his knees, he might
 worship God among you.—In conclusion, my brethren, when 26.
 you come together, and every man hath his peculiar gift, let
 each be exercised with decency, and order ; and with a view merely
 to the instruction of your congregation.

21. Isa. xxviii. 11, 12.

26. The texture of this verse seems to imply, that when they all came together, each with his particular gift, they were not so much concerned about edifying the church, as they were eager and contentious to display their several talents.

27. The following rules may direct you.—Let not above two, or three at most, speak before one assembly, in an unknown tongue; and that in order; and let what is said, always be interpreted:
28. without an interpretation let no unknown tongue be used.—Let
29. the teacher, and expounder observe the same rule. Two or three are as many as I would have speak at one meeting. Let others sit by; and only approve, or disapprove the passages expounded.—
30. 31. Tho another should be more informed on a subject, than he who is speaking; yet let him not speak, till the first hath finished his discourse. Decency, and order require this rule. The inspiration
32. of a christian teacher is not like the wild ungoverned fury of a heathen priest: yours is subject to restraint; as coming from that
33. God, who is the author of peace, and order. I must add also, that this is the constant practice of all christian churches.—I
34. 35. would not have women ask questions, and put their difficulties in public. It is unbecoming. Let them ask their husbands at home. Let these instructions be carefully observed; and let
- 36.

27. Why *any one* should be allowed to speak at all in an *unknown tongue* among believers of the same country, is difficult to conceive. It might perhaps be to examine their gifts; or as a proof perhaps to the congregation, that they possessed them. Or there might be persons of different countries present. Against any inconvenience however arising from the exercise of them the apostle sufficiently guards.

30. Our translation of this verse (which is literal,) *seems to imply* a contrary sense: but the context, I think, plainly shews this to be the true sense.

34. I am rather inclined to think, that in this instruction about women, no *public teaching* was *supposed*: but that it was meant to forbid women to ask questions, and raise difficulties, and scruples at church; which would tend to disturb the congregation. Inspired women, no doubt, had often taught in churches; and might teach. Anna the prophetess was an instance. Philip's four daughters (Acts xxi. 9) were other instances. And St. Paul himself (1 Cor. xi. 5) seems to allow it; notwithstanding all that is said to reconcile that text with this. I cannot therefore suppose, that St. Paul here absolutely forbids women to speak in the church. But their asking questions continually might have been a very disorderly thing; and have come to such a height, that the apostle might think fit to repress it.

the Corinthian church remember, that it was not among the first converted; and ought not therefore to consider itself as a model to others. But let all your teachers conform to the advice I have given them, as the advice of an apostle of Christ. The obstinate must take their course.

You see my admonitions have two great points in view. The first is, that the gift of tongues may be used discretely; and the stress laid on *expounding*; which tends more to edify the church. —The second, that all your public services may be performed with decency, and order †.

CHAP.
XV.

1. 2. 3. 4.

5. 6. 7.

I come now to that great article of your faith; and ground-work of your hopes—the resurrection of the dead.—It hath been the constant subject of my preaching to you, that Jesus Christ, according to the whole tenor of prophecy, died for our sins; was buried; and rose again.—I have repeated to you also, the evidence, on which this last great fact is founded—that he was seen, after his resurrection, by Peter, James, and the other apostles at different times—and at one time, by above five hundred people together, most of whom are at this day living witnesses of this

† Chap. xiv. Tho the gift of tongues hath ceased amongst us, this chapter is an admirable piece of instruction to the clergy of any country—especially to the young clergy; who are often not attentive enough to accommodate themselves to their hearers. What matters it, tho they speak neither in Greek nor in Latin, if they treat subjects, or use words, and phrases, which the people do not understand—And if they do this to shew their parts, and learning; they fall *directly* into the fault which the apostle here reproves—that of ostentatiously displaying their gifts. If they would wish to preach for the sake of edifying, they cannot possibly use words of too easy a signification: for they who have been most conversant with low people, know best the short extent of their ideas.

4. It appears, that many of the Corinthian converts disbelieved the resurrection of the dead, (see ver. 12) and others probably held very doubtful opinions about it from hearing it constantly ridiculed by the heathen philosophers, some of whom used to call it *the hope of worms*.

wonderful

8. 9. wonderful event.—To this abundant evidence, I might add my own testimony. Tho inferior to the rest of the apostles, because I was a persecutor of the church of God, and like one born out of due time, yet was I at length favoured with a sight of my Saviour; and by the grace of God, however unworthy, I am what I am. Nor was his grace bestowed on me in vain. Through it's blessed influence my labours in the gospel have been unceasing.

10. I mean not however to depreciate the labours of other apostles.

11. We all unite in one work. We preach, and you believe, that one great doctrine, the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

12. But now if *Christ's resurrection* be thus confirmed, whence is it that any of you can doubt his *own*? Your resurrection is inseparably connected with *Christ's*. If Christ did not rise, *your faith* is vain; and likewise *our preaching*. Instead of apostles, we are false witnesses, testifying the resurrection of Christ, which is void of all truth; unless *his* resurrection insure *ours*. If Christ

13. did *not* rise, our faith is groundless; we are yet in our sins; and

14. all the hopes of those, who sleep in Christ, are perished. Hard

15. 16. indeed would then be the christian's lot; who gives up every thing here, and has nothing to expect hereafter.

20. Be not however misled by these false opinions. Christ is certainly risen; and insures the resurrection of all his followers. As

21. 22. surely as Adam brought death into the world; so surely hath Christ restored us to life: and in a natural order, rising first himself, he enables us to follow him.

23. Then shall be accomplished the great end of the Messiah's kingdom, when all his enemies shall be subdued; the last of which

24. 25. 26. is death. After this great subjection of every thing to Christ, ex-

27.

20. *And became the first-fruits of them, that sleep.* This is a beautiful allusion to the first-fruits under the law, which sanctified the harvest.

cept the Creator himself, hath taken place; then the Messiah, 28
depositing his mediatorial office, shall be united fully with God.

But at present we have to do only with the resurrection of the 29.
dead. If we believe not this article, how absurd is it to embrace
a religion, which enjoins us to be dead to every thing in this 30. 31. 32.
world. Equally so are the dangers, and death, of which we
daily run the risk. Instead of this, it were better at once to
adopt the epicurean maxim, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow*
we die.—Take care however not to be misled by these corrupt 33. 34.
notions; which can indeed only mislead those, (I hope there are
none such among you) who have no knowledge of God.

But perhaps some of your philosophical teachers may urge the 35.
improbability of a resurrection, from their not being able to com-
prehend it.

28. This is one of those passages, on which the Arian builds; and no doubt, it is a great difficulty. I think however it will bear, without any forced interpretation, the sense here given. I know not what more consistent sense can be put on that awfully obscure expression, *that God may be all in all*. Our Saviour is represented in scripture, as sitting at the right hand of God, and making intercession for us. Till the conclusion of this world therefore his *mediatorial office* continues. Time is nothing with him, with whom a thousand years are but as one day. When this great event, the conclusion of all things, shall take place, then God, and Christ become one.—But I give this solution, which is yet authorized by good commentators, with great diffidence and humility. It is a subject we must not pretend to comprehend.

29. It appears, that the apostle having given a short sketch of the completion of the Messiah's kingdom, to which the resurrection of the dead led him, returns again to that point.—Being *baptized for the dead* may signify, as some suppose, suffering martyrdom: as our Saviour, a little before his death, says, *I have a baptism to be baptized with*; and in other places to the same effect: but the sense I have given seems to me the most consistent. The argument is, what shall they do, who give up all the pleasures of this world, if there be no other.

31. *I protest by your rejoicing* is only a mode of asseveration: I protest by your joy in the mercies of Christ.

32. *Fought with beasts at Ephesus*. Some suppose this is literally spoken. But others, who consider that St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, was exempted from such a punishment, suppose he meant the violent contest he had with furious, and wicked men.—The expression will be easy, if we change the sense, and translate the original, *if I had fought*, instead of, *if I have fought*.

36. Can they comprehend the growth of a seed? Does it not die,
 37. before it rises? Does not a different body rise (be it of whatever
 38. grain) from what is sown? And is not the same almighty power
 39. which raises corn from the seed, able also to raise a human body
 from the dust? Why should it seem at all improbable, that God
 should be able from one body to produce another? With what
 a number of bodies, from men to insects, is the world replenished?
 How great the difference among them? Yet whence were all pro-
 40. 41. duced? Take the heavenly bodies also into the account—the sun—
 the moon—the stars; what a variety of splendor do they exhibit? And
 42. 43. yet of what were they composed?—Under this idea consider the
 resurrection of the dead. Is it more incomprehensible, that a glo-
 rious immortal body should arise from a mass of corruption; than
 that all this vast variety of beautiful forms, and splendid bodies,
 should arise from nothing?
44. But you are led into this prejudice by the weaknesses, and imper-
 fections of a natural body; not considering that it is just as easy
 for an almighty God to form a spiritual body, as to form a natural
 45. one; and that this spiritual body may be inherited in the same way,
 46. from Christ; as the natural body is from Adam. The natural
 47. 48. 49. body precedes the spiritual body. And as our first body partakes
 of all the qualities of its earthly parentage; our second body,
 depositing all its weakness, and infirmities, shall be arrayed in all
 50. the glorious qualities of its heavenly one. Flesh and blood cannot
 inherit the kingdom of God. Corruption cannot inherit incor-

36. Some object, that if the seed die, it never rises. But in fact, it does die: it is only the germen, or bud, that springs up; the body of the seed first feeds this bud; and then turns to corruption.

42. The apostle seems to confine what he says here, to the resurrection of the *pious* dead; which is all at present that his discourse led him to. The wicked must look into other parts of scripture for their doom.

ruption.

ruption. But when that great change, of which we have yet no
 conception, shall take place—when the awful voice of God shall
 call the dead from the grave; when this corruptible shall have put
 on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality;
 then shall the words of the prophet be fulfilled, *Death is swallowed
 up in victory*. Then may all the holy disciples of Christ join in
 that triumphant song, founded also in prophecy, *O Death, where
 is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?*—Under the law indeed,
 enforcing sinless obedience, death was a fearful event; for we have
 all sinned, and made ourselves obnoxious to it. But thanks be to
 God in Christ, we are now under a law, which enables us to
 perform what it enjoins; and to avoid what it threatens. We have
 now the full means of victory over death, and the grave.

Let us not then, my brethren, be wanting to ourselves. Let us
 be steady in our faith; and in the conscientious discharge of a holy
 life; assuring ourselves, that on these conditions, our hopes in the
 gospel shall never be in vain.

With regard to the last object of your inquiry, making *collections
 for the poor*, I shall just give you the same instruction, which I
 have given to the churches of Galatia; and that is, that each of
 you should lay by a portion, at the beginning of every week for
 this service, as God hath prospered him; that when I come, all
 may be in readiness. At that time, I will appoint whomsoever
 you shall approve, to carry your liberality to Jerusalem; and will
 myself attend them, if it be necessary.—I propose soon to visit
 Macedonia: but I mean not to take you in my way; as I should
 rather wish to defer my journey to Corinth, till I can stay a longer

CHAP.
 XVI.
 1. 2.

3.
 4.
 5. 6. 7.

54. Isa. xxv. 8.

55. Hosea xiii. 14.

time. Probably I may winter with you; and shall then accept
 8. your assistance in the farther prosecution of my design. Till after
 9. Pentecost however I shall continue at Ephesus, where I have a
 wide field before me; tho I meet with much opposition.—If
 10. 11. Timothy come to you, treat him with affection, and respect;
 12. and assist him, in his journey to me. I shall expect him soon,
 with the brethren, who are with him.—I could have wished that
 Apollos had visited you at this time: but he seemed rather desirous
 to defer his journey, till a more convenient opportunity.

13. And now, my brethren, I beseech you to exert yourselves; and
 14. maintain that courage, and constancy in your profession, which
 become christians. Above all things, let there be no animosity,
 nor dissention among you in religious matters; but let that charity,
 which I have so fully described, govern all your counsels—let it
 15. 16. govern your preaching—and general intercourse with each other.

I need not desire you to pay respect to Stephanus. He, and
 his family were not only the first converts in Achaia, but have
 17. been very useful to me in their ministerial labours. Your sending
 him, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, was particularly pleasing to
 me: for they have given me a full account of the state of your
 18. church; and have supplied what was omitted in your letter. They
 have given me that comfort, which they have often given you.
 19. 20. Such men you will ever hold in high esteem.

I transmit to you the general salutation of the church; and like-
 wise of private christians. Be you as affectionate among each other,
 as this church is disposed to be affectionate to you.

10. Probably because of his youth this caution was thought necessary; see 1 Tim.
 iv. 12.

I now with my own hand sign this epistle: and at the same time, my kind remembrance of you all—wishing you always to confider, that he who does not live up to the religion he professes, deprives himself of all hope of happiness hereafter. 21. 22.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Rest assured of my constant affection. 23. 24.

22. The expression *Maran-atha* is Syriac; which language had entirely corrupted the Hebrew after the captivity. It signifies *The Lord cometh*; namely *to execute vengeance*. After the Jews had lost the power of life and death, they used to execrate with this curse, such crimes as were capital; as much as to say, *Tho we cannot punish them, the Lord will*. St. Paul therefore speaking of the apostacy of professed christians, as of a crime not punishable by human laws, says, alluding to this practice, *Tho men cannot punish it, God will*.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

own heart with this quiet
meditation of your life.
It does not live up to the
If hope of happiness is
our Lord Jesus Christ
in action.

made in spirit; which language
it signifies. The Lord's words; name
of life and death. They need to create

SECOND EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

C H A P.

I.

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8. 9. 10.

PAUL, an apostle of the Lord Jesus; and Timothy; to the church of Corinth; and to all the christians of Achaia; grace, and peace from God, and Christ!

With thankfulness I look up to God, the Father of our blessed Lord—the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort; for that consolation in all my afflictions, which enables me to comfort them, who are afflicted. For if our faith in Christ be the source of our worldly distresses, it is much more the source of our spiritual consolation. It is a happiness also to me to think, that my *afflictions* and *joys*, are yours also; and that they tend to impress you with holy sentiments on both these subjects. For I doubt not, but as you are partakers of the distresses, which often attend religion; you are also partakers of it's consolations. The distresses, of which

8. An account of Paul's sufferings is contained in the xivth, xvth, and sixth chapters of Acts; some of which happened in Greece, and some in Asia. The apostle seems more particularly in the 9th verse to allude to his being left for dead, after he had been stoned. See Acts xiv. 19.

I par-

I particularly speak, are those I suffered in Asia; which were indeed such, that if I had trusted in any power less, than in that God, who raiseth the dead, I should have been overwhelmed by them. He can deliver in circumstances the most desperate. He hath often delivered me; and I fully trust, that I shall ever receive from him all proper deliverance. Your holy prayers also, I doubt not, united with mine in obtaining my deliverance; as your praises will unite with mine in expressing my thankfulness.

For myself, whatever my distresses have been from ill-disposed men, I have always had the testimony of my own conscience, that with honesty, and sincerity—through the grace of God, and not in worldly wisdom, I have preached the gospel of Christ. You, in particular, are my witnesses of this; as you have often acknowledged; and always, I doubt not, will acknowledge; considering my preaching as the means of your happiness; as I consider your conversion as an addition to mine. In this I shall always rejoice; and especially in the great day of the Lord Jesus.

In this kind disposition toward you, I had determined to visit you a second time, in my way from Macedonia; and to receive your assistance in my journey to Judea. At that time I fully intended it: but they who are ready to put a bad interpretation on all my actions, I find, accuse me of levity; as if I did not intend, what I assured you I did intend. God is my witness, I did mean it: and neither in this, nor in any thing else, that I, or your other pastors in Christ, have said to you, have you been deceived. The promises of God are all founded in truth; and

11. By *gift* here the apostle means *deliverance*.

15. See 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7.

18. When a man plainly *affirmed*, or *denied*, or, (in the Hebrew language,) had his *yea*, *yea*; and *nay*, *nay*; he was an honest man. But when he affirmed, and denied the same thing; or had *his yea*, and *nay* at the same time, he was the contrary.

20. The connection of these verses with the preceding is difficult.

we, who act under Christ, act under the influence of the same Holy Spirit of truth.—The true cause, I call God to witness, of my not coming, at this time, to Corinth, was tendernefs and forbearance to those who have offended. I would not have it be supposed, that I pretend to assert any dominion over your faith. Your faith is unalterably established. All I wish for, in this matter, is to contribute to your spiritual joy. And for this reason I chose to defer my journey, till all occasion of offence should be removed. My comfort is in your joy: if I throw you into distress, I make myself unhappy.—Instead of coming to you therefore in person, I write this letter; lest that happy meeting, which I expected, should be turned into an unhappy one: for I know, that you are partakers of my joys, and griefs.

The severity of my last letter towards the incestuous person, cost me much affliction, and many tears. I was grieved for the distress I had occasioned: but I thought it necessary to give you this instance of my love. In my grief, I doubt not, but you all had your share; tho I do not suppose, you were all involved in the occasion of it.—I now think, that as the offender hath shewn penitence, his punishment should be remitted. Forgive him therefore; receive him again into your communion; and shew him, by not laying too severe a hand upon him, that you love *him*, tho you detest his *crime*. The end of my writing is fully attained, when I have restored this offender; and seen a proof of your obedience. My forgiveness in Christ shall certainly follow yours; for I know that despair is among the devil's chief means of seduction.

And now, my brethren, be fully assured of my earnest care, and concern for you. If you want a new proof of it, know, that when

23.
24.
C H A P.
II.
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7. 8.
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12. 13.

2. What tendernefs of sentiment the holy apostle expresses here to his flock!

5. There is a great difficulty in this verse.

14. I went to Troas, with a view to preach the gospel; tho I met there a very ready acceptance; yet because I found not Titus, from whom I expected an account of my Corinthian converts, I could not rest; but went in search of him into Macedonia. There I found him—and there, I thank God, I heard that happy account of the prosperity of your church, which makes me triumph in Christ.

15. 16. But still great is the difficulty of our ministry. To some we are the means of life: while we increase the guilt of others, who continue incorrigible under our reproof.—Yet a gracious God, I doubt not, will accept our services, with whatever success they may be attended: for we have this inward testimony, that we do not corrupt the gospel; but preach it with sincerity, as in the sight of God.—It is not however, I trust, necessary for me to say any thing in my own defence; or to procure, as may be required from others, letters of recommendation to you, or from you. Your conversion is our letter of recommendation, open to the perusal of all—dictated by Christ, tho written by us—not with ink—nor like the law, on tables of stone; but with the Spirit of God on your hearts. Such confidence have we in our ministry before God, and Christ! Not that we form this confidence in any degree, on ourselves: but trust intirely in God, who hath appointed us his ministers of the gospel; from whence proceedeth

17.
C H A P.
III.
I.

14. See chap. vii. 6.

15. 16. The sense of these two verses is not perfectly clear. I have transposed them by explaining the sixteenth first: which I think, renders them somewhat clearer.

6. *Who hath made us*, says the text, *able ministers of the New Testament—not of the letter; but of the Spirit*. This expression hath given great latitude to certain interpreters of scripture; who from hence think themselves authorized in expounding what they please in an allegorical sense. Whereas, it is evident, the apostle has nothing to do with the *writings* of the New Testament, which did not yet exist: but meant only to shew, that the New Testament, (or christian dispensation) was superior to the law.

that life, which the law could not give. If the dispensation, and ministry of the law were of a glorious nature, (which was sufficiently shewn by that lustre on the face of Moses, which dazzled the eyes of the people) how much more glorious may we suppose the dispensation of the gospel, which was intended to compleat it? If the law were glorious, which was defective, and could not save; how much more glorious is the gospel, which makes up all it's deficiencies? There can indeed be no comparison between a dispensation, which was always intended, in a due course of time, to expire; and one of continual duration. The ministers of the gospel therefore speak plainly, and freely it's great truths: while Moses, covering his face with a veil, signified by that type, that there remained still something behind unseen. And this veil is still upon the hearts of the greatest part of the Jewish nation; who yet see not the glory concealed behind. Nor can they see it, till they embrace the christian faith; which will spiritualize their hearts; and at once set them free from all the ceremonies of the law, and the dominion of sin. In this holy religion, unveiled, we see, as in a glass, the image of our Lord; and conforming ourselves to it through the influence of his Holy Spirit, are carried daily to new degrees of perfection.

Under this sense therefore of the holiness of the christian religion, and it's ministry, I persevere through all opposition, in the discharge of my duty. Conscious to myself, that I use no deceit, nor worldly arts of any kind, I address the consciences of men

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C H A P.
IV.

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15. Mr. Lock supposes, St. Paul may possibly allude here to a custom, still among the Jews in their synagogues, of putting a veil over their faces, when the law is read.

18. This is a beautiful allegory. As Moses by looking at the divine Shechinah, received a lustre on his countenance; so we, by looking at Christ in his gospel, should receive the impression of his glorious image.

3. 4. in all the honesty of truth before God. It is impossible indeed, that any one should resist the force of this pure, and rational belief; unless his understanding were first disturbed by the wickedness of the world. We preach not ourselves, my brethren, but Christ Jesus, our Lord. *We* are merely the ministers of the gospel, receiving all our knowledge from that God, who with the same power, with which he commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath illuminated our hearts with the rays of the gospel, and the bright image of it's blessed Author.—Conscious therefore of our own imperfections; and, at the same time, of the power of God, under which we act; we are afflicted on every side; yet always comforted: we are perplexed; but never in despair: we are persecuted; but never forsaken: we faint; but always revive. The sufferings, and death of our blessed Lord, stand threatening on one side; his glorious resurrection exhorting on the other. For as we die for his sake, we are confident also of living through him; and of being, through our death, the ministering cause of your life, as well as of our own. Under all these worldly distresses, a steady faith supports us. Like the holy psalmist we cry out, *tho we are in the midst of the sorrow of death; yet shall we walk before God in the land of the living.* Under the influence therefore of this faith, we preach the gospel; fully assured, that, that God, who raised up Christ from the dead, will raise us up also, and all good christians with us.

4. It is surprizing that any interpreters should suppose, as some do, that God Almighty is meant by the *God of this world*; as equivalent phrases are so often applied in scripture to the devil.

13. It seems plain, that the apostle alludes to the cxvi. Psalm; which is a song of deliverance; and in which, as the apostle says, the holy psalmist expresses his joy, through the influence of his faith. *I believed, and therefore have I spoken.* (See verses 3, 9, 10.)

My sufferings therefore in the cause of religion, respect two great ends—your good—and the glory of God. Hence arise our zeal, and perseverance. Tho the body shrink under the oppression; the mind is strengthened more and more; and not suffering itself to be depressed by the light afflictions of mortality, it rises above them. Unbounded by the visible things of this world, it passes their limits into the regions of faith; where it contemplates the glories of eternity. Our earthly tabernacle, we know, will soon dissolve; but it is our great hope, and consolation, that we shall have an everlasting one prepared for us hereafter. Our miseries here make us wish, in God's good time, for our heavenly abode; where we may lay down the burthen of life for the joys of immortality; of which God hath not only given us a promise; but a foretaste also, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

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18.
C H V. P.
V.
1.
2. 3. 4.

In the full confidence then of this, we consider ourselves here, as at a distance from home. In this world our happiness depends on hope; not enjoyment. We keep continually before us the prospect of our heavenly home; where we shall be present with the Lord. In the mean time, we live preparing ourselves with our best endeavour, for his gracious acceptance; waiting for that awful time, when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; and receive our doom according to our deeds.

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How deeply I have been influenced by these great truths; and how sincerely I have preached them from a sense of their importance—God knows: and I hope you, who have had many testimonies of my sincerity on this head, will be able to vindicate me to those, who may be too much governed by appearances.

11.
12.

6. *Knowing that we are at home in the body*, is a very bad translation; indeed it is directly contrary to the apostle's meaning. *Ενδημῶντες* signifies properly *sojourning*, not *being at home*.

9. *Φιλοτιμωμεθα* signifies something more than *we labour*—it is the *height of our ambition*.

13. Whether the doctrine, which we preach—the acceptance of the
 Gentiles—be that wild doctrine, which the Jews represent it to be,
 let God be judge: but if it be the truth, yours is certainly the
 14. gain. With what ideas of God's goodness can we suppose, that
 the mercies of the gospel are extended only *to a part of* mankind?
 If Christ died for all; we must suppose, that all equally want the
 15. benefit of his death—the benefit of his laws—and the benefit of his
 16. resurrection.—Henceforth therefore all difference among nations
 is done away. Our blessed Lord himself, tho once known under
 Jewish distinctions, is now no longer considered in that light: and
 17. every man, of whatever nation, who receives the gospel faithfully,
 by a thorough change of heart, and life, belongs to Christ. The
 Jewish dispensation is intirely abolished; superseded by the christian.
 18. 19. The goodness of God hath reconciled the whole world to himself,
 through Christ: and we are the appointed ministers of this recon-
 20. ciliation. This is all we pretend to; exhorting you, as the ambaf-
 21. sadors of Christ, to accept the gracious terms of the gospel; and
 through holy lives, to be reconciled to God, who hath accepted
 C H A P. Christ's death as an offering for sin. As his ministers also, we
 VI. intreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain; but to remember
 1. 2. the words of the prophet, in which God promises a day of salvation
 to the Gentiles; which day of salvation, be assured, is now fully
 come.

3. For myself, it has been my constant endeavour so to live, as to
 throw no scandal on the ministry of the gospel. I have not lived

13. Some interpreters suppose, that the apostle only alludes, in general, to the warmth and transport, with which he sometimes speaks. I think from what follows, from the 13th verse to the end of the chapter, and to the third of the next, that the apostle had the Gentiles in his eye; and some able commentators, especially Dr. Pyle, are of the same opinion. It must be confessed however that the passage is very obscure; and the transition to the Gentiles rather harsh.

2. See Isa. xlix. 5, 6, 8.

a life of worldly enjoyment; but in a constant state of suffering, 4. 5.
 either from the enemies of religion; or in the course of my ministerial labours. I have endeavoured also to unite the practice of 6.
 truth with the knowledge of it; and to give my preaching force, 7.
 not only by miracles; but by a holy life.—In the mean time, 8. 9.
 uninfluenced by the favourable, or unfavourable opinions of men, I pass daily through that variety of contradictions, which are ever
 incident to the life of an apostle—living, and dying, at the same time 10.
 —persecuted; yet exalted—sorrowful; yet rejoicing—poor myself;
 yet making others rich—deprived of every thing; and yet possessing
 all things.

To you my spiritual children, I speak freely on these subjects. 11.
 My heart is open. But I fear the *filial* affection is not equal to the 12.
parental. Let me earnestly intreat a full return of that love which 13.
 I shew.—As the greatest instance of it, let me beseech you to 14. 15. 16.
 have no communication with the wicked practices of the heathen
 around you. Nothing can be of a nature more opposite to the
 holy religion you profess. Light is not more at variance with
 darkness; than the abominable rites, and wicked lives of a heathen;
 with the holy worship, and purity of a christian. A christian
 church is the temple of God. The prophetic promises of God's
 dwelling among his people, and being their God, belongs now 17.
 peculiarly to them. As the Jews were ordered to leave the heathen
 in ancient times; so are you now. *Separate yourselves*, saith the 18.

14. There is something very expressive in the original word, *ερεοζυγῶντες*: *Be not like two animals yoked together, and drawing in opposite directions*. Such are the lives of a pious christian, and a wicked heathen.—The apostle however cannot mean here to exclude all communication between good and bad men. He plainly shews 1 Cor. v. 10, that this could not be avoided. His precept therefore goes no farther than to exclude his converts from joining in the idolatrous rites, or other wicked practices, of the heathen.

16. 17. 18. See Levit. xxvi. 12. Isa. lii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 1.

CHAP.
VII.

1.

2.

Lord now, as he did formerly: *touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; I will be a father to you; and you shall be sons and daughters unto me; faith the Lord.*—Since then my brethren, you have these holy promises, let me exhort you to live suitably to them; avoiding every impurity of life; and improving in every christian duty. Reject not these kind admonitions: but receive me among your truest friends—as one, who hath endeavoured, by all means in his power, to promote your temporal, and eternal happiness.

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And yet I say not this from any doubts, or dissatisfaction: for, as I have often told you, you are my greatest joy. I could live, and with you. What I say, proceeds from my affection to you: for I glory in you; and in all my distresses feel a comfort from the thoughts of your progress in the gospel.—And yet the distress I felt on your account in Macedonia, before God graciously relieved me by the coming of Titus, was very great. The account he brought me of your penitence, and sincere regard for me, was indeed a comfort to me; and eased me of that distress, which I felt on having written my former letter. That letter, I find, gave you the degree of sorrow, which I wished. And I am now glad I wrote it, as it brought those, for whose particular use it was intended, to a sincere repentance. There are two kinds of sorrow, the *religious*, and the *worldly*. The latter produces no effect. But

2. Some commentators consider the apostle here as alluding to the deceits of their false teachers. I think it more probable, that by a negative he means only modestly to imply an affirmative. *I have wronged no man: that is, I have done all in my power to assist every man.*

5. How affectionate is the distress, which the apostle shews in this, and in some of the succeeding verses; alluding to the opposition he had met with, and the severity he had used, which he feared might be too great. *Without were fighting;—within were fears.*

the

the sorrow, which you shewed, had every sign of godly sorrow. 11.
 It produced an earnest vindication of yourselves—great distress and
 indignation at what had passed—and a vehement desire, and zeal to
 avoid every offence for the future. On my part be assured, that 12.
 what I wrote, was not through any partiality to one, or dislike to
 another; but merely from a concern for the good of the whole
 church. This is the great foundation of my joy. Nor was I a 13.
 little happy to find, that you had occasioned the same joy in Titus.
 For as I had boasted of you to him, it could not but be a great 14.
 pleasure to me to find, I had said nothing, but what he acknow-
 ledged to be the truth. His affection you have intirely gained by 15.
 that respectful submission, with which you received the injunctions
 he brought. My confidence therefore in you is effectually secured. 16.

I must now make inquiry about collections for your poor brethren
 in Judea; and must remind you of the charitable disposition of the
 churches of Macedonia; which have shewn their liberality in the
 midst of all their afflictions, even beyond their abilities; and have
 requested us to accept their bounty; and to take upon us the
 distribution of it. Theirs was an instance of liberality even beyond
 my expectation: but it proceeded from those, who had first given
 themselves to the Lord; and were fully assured, that we should
 suffer them to do only what was agreeable to his will. I thought
 it proper therefore, that Titus should recommend this example
 to you, in order to promote your liberality; that as you have shewn
 yourselves endowed with other christian graces, you may give an
 instance of this grace also.

You must not however consider my *exhortation*, as a *command*.
 It is meant only to encourage you not to be behind any other church
 in proving the sincerity of your love; and in following the example
 of your blessed Saviour; who, tho he was rich, yet for our sakes
 made himself poor.—But tho I give you no command on this

11. head; yet it is my advice to you, not to put off this good work
 any longer. As it was talked of a year ago; and as you shewed
 then an inclination towards it, you will now, I hope, compleat
 it; and make a collection according to every man's abilities. To
 12. make alms-giving an *act of religion*, it must proceed from a willing
 13. mind.—Yet I have no inclination to ease others, by laying a
 14. burthen on you: but to make that happy equality among you,
 which is so desirable among brethren. Your abundance, at present,
 supplies their need; and their abundance, in some future time,
 15. may supply yours. Such was the wise distribution of God, when
 he provided for the necessities of our forefathers: *He that gathered
 much, had nothing over; and he that gathered little, had no lack.*

16. The same sentiments of this matter fill the heart of Titus; who
 17. wants not my exhortations to take the earliest opportunity to visit
 18. you. With him also I send another disciple, whose eminent graces
 19. are not a little distinguished among all the churches; inasmuch
 as he was the person appointed to assist me in the administration
 20. of their bounty—an office, which, among so many censurers, I
 21. did not care to undertake by myself; as it is my constant endea-
 vour to preserve a fair appearance, as much as possible even in the
 22. sight of man.—With these two disciples I shall send a third,
 who hath always shewn himself very active in the affairs of the
 gospel; and is particularly desirous to visit you, since the pleasing

15. Exod. xvi. 18.

18. This other disciple is supposed to be St. Luke. *But his praise in the gospel*, is not supposed to arise from his writing, but *preaching* it. His gospel, it is thought, was not then written.

19. *Declaration of your ready mind.* This seems rather difficult. We do not easily understand how the bounty of the Macedonian churches could be a declaration of the ready mind of the Corinthians. But in some good copies *ημων* is read instead of *υμων*, which sets all to rights.—The choice of the churches is here made by the *χειροτονια*, which signifies the *holding up of hands*; in opposition to the *χειροθεσια*, or election by the *imposition of hands*.

22. Supposed to be Apollos.

account I have given him of your situation.—If therefore any inquiries are made with regard to these three disciples, be assured, that Titus is my particular assistant, and fellow-labourer; and that the other two were engaged in a trust of the same kind by the Macedonian churches; and are faithful ministers of the gospel. You will shew them that kindness therefore, that is due to the churches they represent; and agreeable to that favourable impression of you, which I have given them.

As to your raising a collection, I can have no doubt. I know your ready zeal, which I have boasted of to the churches of Macedonia, with a view to incite the charity of others. I am only afraid, that you may not be intirely ready; and for this purpose I send these brethren to you, not to take your collections; but only to give you notice to have them prepared: lest if any of the Macedonian christians come with me, and we should find you unprepared; I who have boasted so much of you; and you, of whom I have boasted, may both be ashamed together.

The particular sum, which is proper for each to give, must be left to every man's discretion. Only this I must say in general, that he who soweth plentifully, shall also reap plentifully. Let no man however give from any motive, but that of a charitable heart. Nothing else can please that gracious Master; who is able to add more and more to his liberal servants—who can increase their power of doing good here; and (as the psalmist speaks of the truly charitable man) *give their righteousness its eternal reward hereafter*.—May that God, who enableth you to do works of charity, reward you for them, among his faithful servants! And may he enrich you more, and more in those graces, which redound so much to his glory! For your charity does

23.

24.

C H A P.
IX.

1. 2.

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9. See Pf. cxii. 9.

not spend itself in it's first intention, that of administering to the wants of the necessitous; but becomes afterwards the source of
 13. praise, and thanksgiving to God, in which all those pious christians, who are assisted by it, unite; while they look up to the great
 14. Giver with gratitude, for your charity, as well as all the other instances of his goodness; and join in prayers for you, the blessed
 15. instruments of it.—Thanks be to God for extending the influence of one virtue through so wide a range †!

C H A P.
X.

1. 2.

I must now change my subject. I am sorry to find there are still among you some, who represent me as a deceiver; and set at variance my behaviour, when absent, and present; making even my bodily infirmities the ground of their offence. Such persons I should rather wish to reclaim by gentleness, than treat with apostolic severity. Why should they dwell upon the weakness of my bodily powers? Of what consequence are they? It is not through the powers of nature that I exercise my office. It is not through them, but through the power of God, that the prejudices of mankind are conquered—that all the vain opinions, and reasonings of men are subdued—that a profane, and idolatrous world is brought to the knowledge of God—and that the stubborn heart of man is opened by faith, and obedience, to the law of Christ. From the same high authority also I have the power to punish such offenders, as are not yet reduced to obedience; but, notwithstanding the submission of others, still persist in their opposition; judging by mere appearances; and forming opinions of me by such rules, as they would not submit to themselves. If I should exert towards such persons a little more of that authority, which God hath given me to keep in awe notorious offenders,

† In what a grand, and noble light the apostle places alms-giving in these last four verses!

I should

I should not perhaps exceed my commission. It would then be found, not only that my letters have their weight, (which they allow) but that my presence also would be accompanied with authority. I shall not however imitate the vanity of those, who have no scale of comparison, but themselves: nor boast of my own gifts, which are merely distributed to me by God for your sake. I claim nothing myself, being enabled solely by God to preach the gospel among you. And not wishing to build on the labours of others, I have hope, that when your faith shall be fully established, I may enlarge my views, and carry the gospel into regions still more remote.—Thus will all boasting cease, where the glory of God is the great end. A man's own commendation of himself is of no value: let us endeavour to obtain the only commendation worth our pursuit—the approbation of God.

Yet ascribe it not to folly, and vanity, if I should speak a little of my own labours. Greatly concerned I am for you all, that you may persevere in the gospel; and that you may never be prevented by designing men, from attending to it's plain, and simple truths.—I hope you never will, till a better Saviour, a better Spirit, and a holier gospel be preached unto you. For myself, I imagine my labours among you, are not inferior to those of any apostle. Inferior I may be to many in elocution, and address: but I take upon me to say, I am inferior to none, in preaching the gospel in sincerity and truth.

But perhaps it may seem an offence, and be considered as a debasement, that I have laboured for my own maintenance, while I preached the gospel among you—that I received from other

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CHAP.
XI.

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16. *Not to boast of another man's line of things made ready to our hand.* This obscure expression, and others in this epistle, seem to refer to some particular person, who, through undue pretences, had interfered with St. Paul's church at Corinth.

9. churches, and not from you—and that even while I was with you, I received my maintenance from the Macedonian churches.

10. 11. This indeed is the truth: and I make it my boast. But if any
12. of you conceive it shews a want of love to you, he is greatly mistaken. The real cause is, that I may take away all occasion of reproach from those among you, who pretend, tho not perhaps
13. with truth, to this disinterestedness themselves. I fear there are
14. some such designing men among you. Satan himself pretended
15. to be an angel of light: it cannot be matter of wonder therefore, if his ministers should follow his example; and draw on themselves a like destruction.

16. Let me then in opposition to these teachers, boast a little of
17. 18. my own labours, however weak this boasting may appear. Whether they glory in their Jewish, or in their christian advantages, I
19. can place myself on an equality with them. Nor can you take amiss my boasting, inasmuch, as wise as you think yourselves,
20. you suffer much more from your new instructors. Your understandings are imposed on; your possessions are freely taken: your persons are insulted: and we, the apostles of Christ, are treated with every reproach. Let me however assume some boldness in this matter; and shew them, whether, on a comparison, I have
21. not more to say for myself, than they have.—Can they claim
22. more privileges from the law, than I claim?—Or, if they claim
23. 24. 25. as ministers of the gospel (allow my boasting) can they shew
26. 27.

13. 14. 15. Let it all along be remembered, that these censures were made by an *inspired apostle*. It does not belong to us to form such judgments.

24. &c. Many of these distresses, which the apostle enumerates, are mentioned in the acts of the apostles.—The *thirty-nine stripes*, he received from the Jews. They were inflicted commonly with a scourge of three thongs, and were the utmost that could be inflicted. See Deut. xxv. 3. *Beating with rods* was a punishment inflicted by heathen magistrates, particularly the Romans. See Acts xvi. 23.

fuch

such labours as I have endured—the stripes—the imprisonments—the dangers by sea, and land—the various terrors of death—the fatigues—the watchings—the want both of food and cloathing? Besides all these bodily afflictions, I am daily oppressed with those cares, which arise from an attention to so many churches. This multiplies my distresses. Who in all these communities is weak, whose weakness I do not feel; and endeavour to assist? Who is perverted; and I am not on fire to recover him? If any boasting be allowable, it may be allowable at least to boast in sufferings. God knoweth the truth of what I affirm. My persecutions indeed began from the very first moment of my preaching the gospel; when the governor of Damascus, at the instigation of the Jews, endeavoured early to apprehend me; and I evaded his search by a stratagem. On that occasion, and ever since have I been graciously delivered by the goodness of God.

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C H A P.
XII.

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But on this subject I have said enough. To this I could add visions, and revelations. I could tell you of a person, who about fourteen years ago, was carried into heaven; but whether in the body, or in the spirit, God only knoweth. There he saw, and heard, what human language cannot describe. Of such glorious revelations a man might boast: but for myself, I will boast only of my infirmities. And yet, if I should boast, I speak only the truth. But I forbear; as it may occasion among my opposers, a disagreeable comparison between such pretensions, and my present appear-

33. See Acts ix. 25.

2. The apostle says, *I knew a man in Christ*: but this is only a modest way of expressing himself, whom he certainly meant.

7. Dr. Whitby, and other good interpreters, are of opinion, that by *the thorn in the flesh*, St. Paul only means his bodily infirmities. Indeed Dr. Whitby's arguments are so strong, that

appearance. These bodily infirmities have, no doubt, been given me by a gracious Providence to repress that undue exaltation, which might arise from such heavenly communications; and mine adversaries have found the means to turn them to my disadvantage. I have often earnestly besought the Lord to remove this evil from me. But God assists his servants in his own way: and tho my petitions were not granted in the manner, in which I hoped, I was assured, that God's grace should be sufficient for me; and that the greater my weaknesses were, the more evident would be the gracious assistance, I should receive. I boast therefore of infirmities, which shew that the power of Christ dwells in me; for whose sake, I can even take pleasure in those infirmities; and in that disgrace, opposition, and persecution, which arise from them: because, in fact, my weakness is the greatest indication of that heavenly Power, that assists me.

Thus you compel me to that boasting, which you ought to have prevented by defending my character against those who have maligned me: for tho in myself I am nothing; yet am I, through the grace of God, on an equality with the first apostles. I have surely shewn among you, all the signs of an apostle by refusing no labour in preaching the gospel; and by confirming the truth of it by miracles. In what instance are you inferior to other churches; except in my not receiving any maintenance among you? This is the only injury I have done you. I am now preparing a third time to visit you; and I shall act then, as I have hitherto done, by putting you to no expence on my account. It is you, not your possessions, that

that I think they cannot be refuted.—In our translation the *thorn in the flesh*, and the *messenger of Satan* are made the same. It should be translated, *a thorn in the flesh; that the messenger of Satan*, &c. Some commentators suppose, and I think it is no unlikely conjecture, that this *thorn in the flesh* was particularly an impediment in his speech; the same which disqualified Moses from speaking to Pharaoh. Exod. iv. 10.

I aim

I aim at. I am like those parents, who lay up for their children ; but will not suffer their children to contribute any thing to them.—What would I not suffer for the sake of your happiness !—I only with the return, which I receive, was equal to my love. 15.

I know it hath been said, that I suffer others to draw money from you on my account, tho I impose nothing on you myself.—Let them name any person, whom they suspect of such artful dealings. I sent Titus among you ; and another disciple. Did either of those act deceitfully with you ? Or can any one instance be shewn, in which those disciples followed not the example, which we have set them ? 16. 17. 18.

Think not that I want to apologize for myself. I speak before God, I have no end in what I say, but your edification. I fear that I shall find many among you such as I wish not ; and that they shall find me, such as they wish not. This will certainly be the case, if those factions, and contentions continue still, which I have reason to believe did once exist : or if I still find among you that uncleanness, and impurity, which I have so often bewailed. In this my ensuing visit I shall certainly bring these sinful professors to a strict account ; and hear what can be said for and against them. What I told you before, I now repeat, that if I find cause of offence, I will not spare ; but will in person give those impure members of your church, that proof, which they inquire for, of my power in Christ. For as our blessed Lord in his human state suffered all the weaknesses of humanity, and was 19. 20. 21.

C H A P.
XIII.
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3. The apostle seems to threaten that severity, which was sometimes exercised towards notorious offenders. But it should be observed ; first, that this severity was exercised by *apostles*, under the immediate direction of God ; and therefore cannot become a rule to us—and secondly, that the apostle's *threatnings* seem generally to have been so well directed, as to render the *execution* of them needless.

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afterwards

afterwards raised to glory; so we, his apostles, however weak we may appear as to bodily endowments, can through him exert the power of God.

5. Instead however of inquiring for a proof of Christ in *us*; I could wish these members of your church would inquire after a proof of Christ in *themselves*—whether they are of Christ's family—or whether they are among those, who are disapproved by God.
6. 7. For us, I trust, they will not find us of this latter class. But let them consider us in what light they please; my prayer to God
8. is, that *they* may be approved. If they are accepted of God, they need fear nothing from us: for it is not even in our power to
9. censure those, who act in conformity to religion. It will prove indeed the highest pleasure to me, to find my hands thus bound
10. up, as it were, by your penitent and holy lives. It is for this reason, that I give you notice of my intention to visit you; that when I come, I may lay all severity aside; and shew you, how much more God desires your repentance, than your punishment.
11. In conclusion, my brethren, be assured, that peace, and happiness, and holy joy from God, will be the never failing consequence of an increase in christian perfection. Above all things,
12. let the grace of charity abound among you; in which holy bond
13. the brethren here desire to be connected with you.
14. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

AFTER St. Paul had left Galatia, where he had planted the gospel; his new converts were seduced, as they had been in other places, by certain judaizing christians, who taught the observance of the Jewish law, as necessary to salvation. This was the first heresy, as we observed before, that obtained in the christian church. The apostle hearing of it at Corinth, where, it is supposed, he then was, writes the Galatians this epistle.

He first assures them, that the doctrines, he had preached, were the same, which the apostles had taught at Jerusalem. This probably had been denied: for it appears, as if these judaizing christians had represented Paul himself as an upholder of circumcision. (See chap. v. 11.)—The apostle then, about the middle of the second chapter, begins his argument, by shewing the superiority of the gospel to the law; which he continues (answering objections as he proceeds) to the end of the epistle. He himself, when he was *among the Jews* (according to his usual maxim of *becoming all things to all men, that he might by all means save some*) had observed many of the customs of the law; which he conceived to be matters of mere indifference. But here, when he writes to *the Gentiles*, who had been seduced to believe *these things necessary to salvation*, he alters his language; and, in pointed terms, shews them to be vain, and ineffectual.

This epistle is commonly supposed to have been written about the year fifty-three. The subscription, at the end of it, from Rome, is manifestly spurious.

E P I S T L E

T O T H E

G A L A T I A N S.

PAUL, an apostle immediately by divine commission; and all the brethren, which are with me, salute the churches of Galatia. Grace and peace be with you from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; who died to deliver us from the effects of sin, through the goodness of God, to whom be glory for ever. Amen!

C H A P.
I.

1. 2. 3. 4.

I am surprized to find you have already shewn so much unsteadiness in the profession of your religion; and that you have been so easily led aside by those, who pervert the gospel. Assure yourselves, there is no other gospel besides that, which we have preached unto you: and whoever takes upon himself, either to add to it, or diminish from it, shall most assuredly incur the wrath of God. Have I any interest of my own, think you, in this matter? Or am I appointed by man to the office of an apostle? The gospel, which

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7. Ο υκ εστιν αλλο, is rendered very improperly in our translation, *which is not another*. It should be, *which is owing to nothing else*.

I have:

12. I have preached, is not the invention of man. It was revealed to
 13. me immediately from heaven. You know the character I once
 14. bore in the church of God; and the extraordinary zeal I had for
 15. 16. the religion of my forefathers. But when God, in his mercy,
 called me to preach the gospel to the heathen, I made no application
 17. to any man for farther instruction. I had not even a conference
 with the apostles at Jerusalem: but went into Arabia, and returned
 18. by Damascus. Three years afterwards I made a short stay with
 19. Peter at Jerusalem; where I saw none of the other apostles, except
 20. James, the Lord's brother. This, you may be assured, is the
 21. truth. I afterwards went into Syria, and Cilicia: but was personally
 22. 23. unknown to the churches of Judea. They had heard only of my
 24. having formerly persecuted the gospel, and of my conversion after-
 CHAP. wards; for which they glorified God. Fourteen years after, I went
 II. again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me; and
 1. 2. under the guidance of the Holy Spirit I communicated apart to
 the principal apostles there, the doctrines, which I preach among
 the Gentiles; that I might avoid, both for the past, and future,
 3. every handle of offence. But none of them thought it proper,
 that Titus, who was of Gentile extraction, should be circumcised.

12. Ananias seems to have been the most likely person to instruct Paul: but if we turn to the history (Acts ix.) there is not a syllable about Ananias's instructing him. He was also certain days with the disciples at Damascus: (Acts ix. 19) but we have no account of his being instructed by them.

19. *Brother* signifies here, only a near *kinsman*. He was son to the Virgin's sister, as is commonly supposed.

20. The apostle, in this account of his proceedings, means only to shew, that he had not received his doctrine from men. But he asserts in a very solemn manner the truth of what he said; because his conversion was a very wonderful event.

22. The apostle says, *he communicated privately to them of reputation*. The reason of this reserve seems to be, that he feared giving offence, if he should publish *openly among the Jews*, the abolition of the Jewish ceremonies; and the reception of the Gentiles. The times, at Jerusalem at least, would not yet bear it.

In

In our assemblies were some Jewish zealots, who came with no good intention. But notwithstanding my readiness to comply on all innocent occasions with the prejudices of others, I thought this a point, which demanded great firmness. Thus the judaizing opinions of those, who wished to add the ceremonies of the law to the gospel, found as little countenance at Jerusalem, as they had found before at Antioch. Nor indeed did the apostles at Jerusalem, in the conference we had together, add any thing to my doctrine. On the contrary, they were so fully convinced of the truth of my apostleship, that even James, Peter, and John received me as a fellow-labourer in Christ; and desired only, that, in my apostleship among the Gentiles, I should remember the poor in Judea, to which I readily consented.—Sometime after when Peter came to Antioch, I freely opposed him. He had not scrupled to eat with the Gentiles; till some Jewish christians coming to him from James, he was afraid of giving them offence; and temporised with them more, than appeared to me agreeable to the truth of the gospel: and in this he was countenanced by some others; and even by Barnabas himself. When I observed this, I publicly told Peter, that, as he had so far laid aside the Jewish law, as to converse freely with the Gentiles; it could not but appear strange, that he should encourage the Gentiles to observe the ceremonies of the Jews.

In fact, my brethren, even we, who have by birth the privileges of Jews, acknowledge, that we are not justified by these privileges; but by the faith of Christ. And for the sake of this justification we believe in Christ; and relinquish the law. If we seek justification

10. The Jewish poor, found a considerable resource in the sacrifices of the temple, on which they greatly depended. But such of them as became christians, were probably deprived of this advantage, and were rendered more necessitous, than the poor in other places. We see St. Paul in several of his epistles stir the Gentile christians to make collections for the Jewish.

12. See Acts x. 28, and also xi. 3.

18. by the law, what do we make of Christ, by whom we pretend to
 19. 20. be justified? Not surely the minister of salvation. If I have recourse
 21. to the law, I acknowledge myself still unjustified by Christ. But
 by renouncing the law, I live through Christ, who gave himself for
 me. Otherwise, I should frustrate the grace of God; and substitute legal righteousness instead of the death of Christ.

C H A P.
 III.

1. 2. How is it then, that you, who have been so fully instructed in
 the cause, and design of Christ's death, should suffer yourselves to
 3. be so strangely misled? Did you receive the *miraculous gifts of the*
Spirit, from the law, or from the gospel? And after such *heavenly*
favours, do you expect to be perfected by *carnal ordinances*? Why
 4. have you suffered so much for the gospel, if the efficacy of the
 5. gospel be now relinquished? The Spirit which hath been shed;
 and the miracles which have been wrought among you; were they
 derived from the observances of the law, or from the power of the
 gospel?
 6. Even Abraham himself was justified by faith; and is therefore
 7. 8. in fact, the father of *all* true believers: for God, who from the
 beginning, intended to justify the Gentiles by faith, assured him,
 9. *That all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him.* So that
 you see Abraham, and all who pursue his steps, are justified in
 10. the same manner. The law could not save. It required *strict*
obedience: and as no man could pretend to this; no man, of course,
 11. could be justified by the law. A prophet under the law itself
 12. tells you, that *the just shall live by faith.* By the *law* therefore, it
 is plain, they could not live.

2. 2 Cor. xi. 4. 1 Cor. xii.

5. This appeal to miracles, at that early period, when so many could have contradicted the appeal, if it had not been just, is a strong argument for the certainty of miracles.

6. 8. 10. See Gen. xv. 6. Gen. xii. 3. Deut. xxvii. 26.

11. Habbak. ii. 4.

From

From that curse therefore, which the law could not avert, 13.
 Christ hath redeemed us by suffering the accursed death of the
 cross: and hence the Gentiles, receiving the blessing as Abraham's 14.
 seed, have inherited the promises through faith. Even a human 15.
 covenant is of such force, that no man can disannul it, or make any
 addition to it. The covenant therefore, which God made with 16.
 Abraham (and which by the very tenor of it was plainly restricted
 to *believers*) could not be altered by the *law*, which was given four 17.
 hundred, and thirty years afterwards. If the blessing had come by 18.
 the *law*; it could not be derived, as it manifestly is, from the
promise made to Abraham.

It may be asked then, What end the law answered? Why was 19. 20.
 it given?

It was given to restrain wickedness, till the gospel should be
 revealed; and the promise should take effect. But from the very
 mode of it's delivery, it could not *be that promise*. For Moses
 stood forth a mediator only between God, and the *Israelites*: whereas
 God's original promise was *universal*; it was that promise in which
all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

Is the law then inconsistent with the promises of God?

By no means. The law did not pretend to justify. The whole 21.
 world was under sin, waiting for the redemption of Christ: and 22.
 the Jewish part of it were prepared by their law for that redemp- 23.
 tion. The law therefore in fact, was only a kind of school-master,

14. Deut. xxi. 23.

20. *Now a mediator*, &c. There are two parties in every covenant. God, and all the
 nations of the earth, were the parties to the *covenant of promise*. Afterwards, in the *covenant*
of the law, God, and the nation of the Jews were the parties. The covenant of the law
 therefore could not disannul the covenant of grace, because only one of the parties of that
 covenant was present, namely God. A mediator is between two parties, as the text says,
 but God is only one of those parties.

24. 25. to lead us to the knowledge of Christ. After the attainment of
 26. the end, the means are no longer necessary. All are now the
 27. 28. children of God, through faith in Christ. Baptism is the bond
 29. of this union. Distinctions are abolished. All are become one
 C H A P. in Christ; in whom you, as well as the Jews, are the seed of
 IV. Abraham, and heirs of the promise.—Even we, who are the
 1. 2. 3. natural descendants of that patriarch, consider ourselves, while we
 4. 5. 6. 7. continue under the legal dispensation, in the light only of children
 8. 9. 10. under the discipline of tutors, and guardians. The gospel hath
 now pronounced us of age. You also, who were before the ser-
 vants of sin, are now adopted, together with us, into the same in-
 heritance. In the days of your idolatry, you served the only Gods,
 you were acquainted with. But now, when you are the *adopted*
 11. 12. *children* of the true God, whence is it, that you wish to put your-
 selves in *bondage* to the Jewish law? Let not my labours among
 you be in vain: but follow my example.

- As far as I am myself concerned, I have no ground of complaint
 13. 14. 15. against you. Amidst all my persecutions, and infirmities, you have ever
 16. treated me with the warmest affection. Do you then now consider

24. What is in this verse, called *justification*, is in the 9th and 14th, called *a blessing*; in the 18th, an *inheritance*; in the 21st, *righteousness*; in the same verse *life*; and in the 22d, *a promise*.

27. The noble metaphor of the original, *have put on Christ*, is too bold to be inserted in a tame exposition. On becoming christians, the apostle tells his converts, *they have put on Christ*.—They are clothed with him—God, when he looks at them, sees nothing, as it were, but Christ.

4. *His son made of a woman*, exactly corresponds with the original promise of a Redeemer—in the *seed of the woman*; not of the man. This can be said of no person, but Christ. And the expression, the *seed of the woman* is unparalleled in scripture.

6. St. Paul perhaps alludes to a custom among the Jewish slaves, who were not allowed to use the titles of *abba*, and *imma* (father, and mother) to the master, and mistress of a family. These words had then a more enlarged meaning than with us.

13. What the particular infirmity was, of which the apostle speaks, we know not: but, it is probable, he means, what he elsewhere calls *a thorn in the flesh*: see 2 Cor. xii. 7.

me as an enemy, because I speak freely to you? Take care, lest
 your new teachers mean only to exalt *themselves* by infusing pre-
 judices against *us*. You have shewn your affection to me, when
 I have been with you: give me equal instances of it in my ab-
 sence.—For you I feel the pains of a second birth; that you may
 become the children of grace.—Heartily do I wish to be present
 with you; that I might accommodate my discourse to your real
 circumstances; for indeed I have my doubts about you.

But let me ask you a question. Will not you, who profess
 so great a reverence for the law, be influenced by it? There you
 read that Abraham had two sons—one by a bond-maid; the other
 by a free woman: and that the former was born in the ordinary
 course of nature; the latter, in consequence of God's extraordinary
 promise. This we interpret as an allegory. The bond-woman
 represents the law; and the free-woman the gospel. We christians
 therefore, as Isaac was, are accounted the children of the pro-
 mise; and as such we inherit the ill usage, which Isaac met with.

17. Ημας instead of υμας, as we find it in some copies, makes much better sense.

20. In the original, it means, that *I might change my voice*—(αλλαξαι φωνην) that is, accord-
 ing to the matter, whether I commend, exhort, or threaten.

23. Gen. xviii.

24. St. Paul probably constructs this allegory on Isaiah liv. 1.

29. This is commonly interpreted of the ill-usage, which Isaac received from Ishmael;
 (Gen. xxi. 9) In what it consisted, we are not told. The short Mosaic account only says,
 that *Ishmael mocked*. But from the whole tenor of the history; and from the apostle's applica-
 tion of it here, we are led to suppose, the case to have been this.—Ishmael had been brought
 up by his mother Hagar, under the notion of being *the child of promise*. Hagar herself was
 so exalted with this idea, that she gave early offence to her mistress Sarah by her behaviour.
 And tho she appears to have been more decent afterwards; yet we may well suppose, she
 never let the idea drop; and that it was also sufficiently instilled into Ishmael.—When there-
 fore Isaac was born, which was about thirteen, or fourteen years after the birth of Ishmael.,
 we may well conceive how great the disappointment was; and that both the mother, and the
 son would be naturally inclined to shew their dislike on all occasions to the real heir of the
 promise.

31.
C H A P.
V.
1.

But what faith the scripture? *Cast out the bond-woman, and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.* So then, my brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, or the law; but are freed from it's obligation, by becoming the children of the free-woman, or the gospel.—Maintain therefore that liberty, which you have received from Christ; and submit not again to the yoke of bondage. While you expect justification from circumcision, you can never receive it from Christ. The law demands perfect obedience. He therefore, who expects justification on this ground, gives up all claim to it from grace; which is the christian's peculiar hope. With him circumcision, and uncircumcision are indifferent matters: the only anchor, on which he rests, is that faith, which produces real love to God and man.

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3. 4.

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9. 10.

You had once indeed just notions of religion. How is it, that you have now lost them? Not certainly through your first instructor.—But a little leaven will easily infect a large mass. I trust in God however, that you will be restored to a right way of thinking; and that the sins of those, who disturb your faith, may rest on their own heads, not on yours.

11.

12.

13.

14.

Consider the persecutions I have met with from the Jews. Are they not testimonies, think you, that I preach no Jewish doctrines?—I would to God, that every cause of seduction were removed from you; and that you would consider yourselves as called into a state of liberty. Only suffer not your loose affections to take advantage of that liberty; but let your mutual love be shewn in mutual good offices. For the whole moral law is fulfilled in

7. *You do run well; who did hinder you?* ΕΤΡΕΚΕΤΕ, and ἀνέκοψα are Olympic expressions. Literally they signify, *You did run well; who crossed, or confounded your course?*

13. The words, *I would they were even cut off*, allude probably to those ecclesiastical censures of excommunication, which the apostle elsewhere calls, *delivering over to Satan*.

this one precept; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. But if
 you are continually injuring each other, you provoke a return;
 and a circulation of ill-offices of course succeeds. The *spirit of*
the gospel alone can secure you against these unruly affections: it
 acts in continual opposition to them; and if you live under it's
 blessed influence, you may be said, in one sense, to be above all
 law.

But take care, again I beseech you, that the gentle spirit of
 the gospel lead you not into any impurities——take care, that your
 lives be not marked with any of those detestable characters, which
 mark the lives of the heathen—and that nothing either sensual,
 or malevolent, may be seen among you. Pure charity, with all
 it's attendant graces, are agreeable to every law. We christians
 should crucify, with our Saviour, all our sinful affections. If the
 Spirit gives us life, it should of course guide our actions.

On the other hand, my brethren, I would not have you vain,
 and conceited; provoking each other by the affectation of superior
 piety: but if you observe any thing offensive, let the offender be
 rebuked with gentleness; considering, that you also yourselves are

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19. 20. 21.
22.

23. 24.

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C H A P.
VI.
1.

17. The apostle, in this verse, describes that internal conflict, which every true christian must feel; and without which he ought not to suppose himself a christian. The imperfections of this mortal state can never be so intirely overcome, but that we must, if we are sincere, feel in ourselves this conflict. If we do not, we may fairly conclude, we are suffering ourselves to be carried down the stream without resistance.

19. The apostle had given the same caution in the 13th verse; and not without great reason is the idea impressed: for we have often seen, both among ancient, and modern fanatics, a strange mixture of *spiritual*, and *carnal* love.

20. Φαρμακεια signifies *poisoning*, as well as *witchcraft*.

21. Κορμαι signifies those *disorderly revellings* so common among the Greeks.

22. Here all christian graces are mentioned as *the fruits of the Spirit*. And no doubt every good disposition is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit of God. Our own endeavours must undoubtedly be used. But if we believe the word of God, we must believe that his Holy Spirit will carry us to much greater heights of virtue, than any endeavours of our own. At the same time, this reflection will teach us humility.

liable

7. liable to temptation. Thus, like true christians, kindly bear with
 3. each other. He, who thinks the most highly of himself, may
 have the greatest reason to acknowledge, he hath been deceived.
 4. But let every man examine *himself*; that he may have a real cause
 5. for rejoicing; which a comparison with another cannot furnish:
 for every man must answer for himself.

6. 7. 8. 9. Be properly observant of the wants of your teachers. God re-
 quires this mark of your sincerity. As the husbandman hath the
 recompence of his harvest for his seed; so shall you from these
 10. temporal things, reap spiritual. During the short time we live
 in this world, we should employ ourselves in acts of kindness
 to all; but our fellow-christians demand our particular attention.

11. You see how long a letter I have written to you with my own
 12. hand: yet before I conclude, let me add, that they who would
 seduce you to the observances of the Jewish law, do it solely to
 13. avoid persecution for the sake of the gospel: for they themselves,
 tho circumcised, do not observe the law; but press circumcision
 on you, merely that they may glory in having made you proselytes.
 14. But God forbid, that I should glory in any thing, but in the cross
 of Christ; through which the world is crucified unto me, and
 15. I unto the world. As I just observed to you, circumcision, and

10. Christians, at that time, were neglected by all people, but themselves: it was necessary therefore for them to be more attentive to each other's wants.

11. Some critics translate this verse (as the words, they say, most properly import) *You see in what large letters I have written*: supposing that the apostle was not well skilled in the Greek character; and shewed his affection in writing in a language, which he wrote so uneasily. Theophylact, Whitby, and Dodderidge are all of this opinion. I own I prefer the other interpretation: and indeed it appears improbable, that a man of so liberal an education, as St. Paul, born too in a Grecian city, and conversant in the Greek poets, should be unskilled in writing the Greek character.

12. The early emperors allowed the *Jews*, throughout the empire, to exercise their religion; and *circumcised christians* were considered as *Jews*: if *uncircumcised*, they were persecuted. This remark will throw great light on this text, and some others.

uncircumcision

uncircumcision are indifferent matters. A thorough change of heart, and life is the only real badge of a christian; and where this is found, there will also be found the true Israelite; and the peace of God will rest upon him. 16.

Let no one then for the future, injuriously suspect me of judaizing. The persecutions I daily suffer, and have suffered, are sufficient testimonies of my fidelity to Christ. 17.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, my brethren. Amen! 18.

17. Some interpreters suppose, the apostle alludes here to scars, or marks from ill usage on his own body; which might be said to resemble those brands, with which soldiers, or slaves, were often marked.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

P R E F A C E

T O

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE to the EPHESIANS.

TH O the authenticity of this epistle hath never been disputed; a question (rather indeed of modern, than of ancient date) hath arisen about it's inscription; some contending, that it should have been inscribed to the Laodiceans. But Dr. Lardner, among others, hath said enough to restore it's ancient title.

The apostle's design, in this epistle, is, first, to shew the great end of the gospel—that it was intended to be preached to all mankind—and that he was appointed the preacher of it to the Gentiles.—From hence he proceeds to exhort his converts against the practices, in which they had formerly lived; and which, as christians, they had renounced; fraud, and deceit of every kind; and the pollutions of the world.—He next touches on relative duties; and concludes with arraying his converts in the armour of a christian.

The great scope therefore of the whole is, first, to inculcate the doctrines of the gospel—and secondly, the duties of it.

This is supposed to be the first epistle, which St. Paul wrote, after he had been brought to Rome, on his appeal to Cæsar.

E P I S T L E

T O T H E

E P H E S I A N S.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

6. 7. 8. 9.

10.

PAUL, an apostle by the will of God, to the church of Ephesus, grace, mercy, and peace!

Blessed be God, who hath called us to the hope of everlasting life, and adopted us, before the foundation of the world, to be his children in Jesus Christ†. With what gratitude should we consider this great act of mercy; and for ever praise that gracious Being, who in his eternal goodness hath declared a method of forgiving the sin of man

† Some expressions in the 4th, 5th, and 11th verses, are among those, which chiefly give occasion to many unguarded things, which have been said on the doctrine of predestination. In those passages, I think, nothing is more evident, than that the apostle has not the least reference to the case of *particular* persons; but only *in general* to Jews and Gentiles; which latter God had determined, from the foundation of the world, in his own good time, to *elect*, or admit to all the blessings of the gospel. The apostle indeed (ver. 4) says *we*, tho he is speaking of the Gentiles.—Mr. Lock has a very long, and useful note on this passage, in which he shews plainly, that “ St. Paul, who was the apostle of the Gentiles, did often, in “ an obliging manner, join himself with the Gentile converts, under the terms *us*, and *we*, “ as if he had been one of them.” See Mr. Lock’s note on this passage.

10. We do not perhaps understand the full force of the words, *which are in heaven, and which are in earth*. Some understand by them, *Jews and Gentiles*; others the *dead and living*; but the noblest idea, I think, is this—The angelic and human nature were once in harmony, and in subjection

man through the death of a Saviour—a dispensation not partially distributed; but taking place immediately on the fall; and comprehending the whole race of mankind. The Jews were first called: afterwards the Gentiles; who may be assured, from receiving the *same gifts* of the Spirit, that they have received also the *same inheritance, and redemption*. 11. 12. 13. 14.

It is the constant subject of my prayers, and thankfulness, that you may continue in union with Christ; and that your minds may be enlightened more and more by contemplating the greatness of this dispensation; and the wonderful events, especially of the resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, whereby God hath united unto himself, the whole race of mankind in one, vast, comprehensive scheme of salvation. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23.

Remember then, that abyss of darkness, from which you have been delivered—that state of sin, and corruption, in which you once lived; and then consider that state, to which you are now raised. Christ's resurrection is an earnest of yours—of that double resurrection, first from sin; and secondly to eternal life; which is through the goodness of God, your promised inheritance. Consider it therefore always as the gift of God's goodness. Claim nothing on your own merits; but all from the grace of God, in Christ; C H A P. II. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

jection to the Son of God. Man afterwards becoming disobedient broke off from this great society, till in the fulness of time, *God gathered together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*. I have not however expressed this idea in the exposition, as it is not the interpretation most generally received.

13. Acts xi. 17.

19. 20. Mr. Lock, and others observe, and I think, with great appearance of truth, that the apostle seems labouring in these verses, to express the greatness of his ideas: *τι το υπερβαλλον μεγαδος τη δυναμεις αυτη εις ημας τη; πιστευοντας κατα την ενεργειαν τη κρατης της ι;χους αυτη.*

21. These abstract names *principality, power, might, &c.* signify, in the eastern language, those who are invested with them.

2. The Jews had a notion that the air was inhabited by evil spirits; and Mr. Mede thinks, St. Paul favoured that opinion.

through faith in whom you are enabled to perform works acceptable to Him.

11. 12. 13. Remember also, that you are now equally admitted with the Jews
14. to all the blessings of the gospel. Tho you were before ignorant even of the first principles of religion, you are now raised to a
15. level with the peculiar people of God. All those rites, and ceremonies are abolished, which distinguished the Jew from the Gentile.
16. 17. 18. Both are reconciled to God in Christ. To both the gospel of peace is preached; and through the same Spirit both have equal access
19. 20. 21. to the Father. You are therefore no longer foreigners; but members
22. of the church of Christ—that universal church, founded upon prophets, and apostles, in which Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone; and in which God, by his Holy Spirit, will now dwell; as he once inhabited the temple of the Jews.

CHAP.

III.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. 7. 8.

- The adoption of the Gentiles is one of the great doctrines, which I am commissioned to preach; and for preaching which I am now a prisoner. From God this office was assigned me. From that great source of truth, I, unworthy as I am, was commissioned to tell the Gentile world (what they had no conception of before) that they are heirs with the Jews, in all the promises of the gospel.
9. 10. 11. 12. I am commissioned also to explain to them the nature of those holy promises; and of their access to the Father through faith; which great scheme of religion, tho proposed from the beginning of the

12. *Having no hope*: that is no influencing hope, for some hope the heathen had.

14. *The middle wall of partition*, alludes to the wall, which separated the court of the Gentiles from the interior of the Jewish temple.

18. The word *προσάγωγη* alludes to the custom of introducing strangers into the presence of a prince.

20. Some suppose, that St. Paul in this, and in other passages, in which he alludes to architecture, accommodates himself to the taste of the Greeks, among whom architecture was in such esteem.

4. St. Paul often speaks of the calling of the Gentiles, as a mystery.

world, is now first revealed; to the wonder, and just astonishment of all the intelligent part of the creation of God.

Consider my sufferings therefore as the source of your advantages. I thank God they are. I repine not at them. I bow my knees to the Father of heaven, and earth, intreating him to perfect his work; and by his blessed influence to form in your hearts the true gospel-spirit of faith and love. I pray, God give you as full, and comprehensive a knowledge of christianity, as we mortals can attain! and fill your minds with his wonderful mercies, and goodness through Christ; for which every thought of our hearts should be impressed with gratitude and praise!

C H A P.
IV.

1. 2. 3.
4. 5.

6.

7.

8.

9. 10.

Let me then beseech you, to make your lives answerable to your profession; and to live with that meekness, and unity among each other, which becomes christians. You all form one body; are directed by the same Spirit; have one hope; and one Saviour; one faith; one baptism; and one God, the common Father of all.—It is true, in this great body, there are various distributions of God's grace; to which the holy psalmist alludes, when mentioning the Messiah's triumphant ascension, he speaks of his *giving gifts to men*, (which by the way, is a proof of the reality of Christ's death; for if he rose, and ascended; he must first have died, and been

18. *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* This text is often taken notice of, as very expressive. Bodies have only three dimensions, *breadth, length and depth*; but the apostle measures the last as it were back again, from the *depth* to the *height*; expressing, the *depth* from which we are delivered; and the *height* to which we are again exalted.

11. Pf. lxxviii. 18.

9. 10. There is great difficulty in the connection of these verses. I have given Mr. Lock's interpretation, which seems to me the best.—The unbelieving Jews, it is certain, would not hear of the death of the Messiah; and used to urge the absurdity of it to the Gentiles. St. Paul, in this very epistle, dwells upon the necessity of it (II. 13. 14. 15. 16) and here having produced a text of scripture for another purpose; he just, by the way, applies it to that argument.

buried:)

11. buried :) some he appointed prophets, others evangelists and teachers;
 12. 13. 14. all of whom are necessary to establish the church—to oppose errors—
 15. 16. and to compleat the great scheme of christianity.

17. Let me exhort you therefore, as members of this great body, to
 18. lay aside all the sinful errors of your past lives. While you were
 19. involved in blindness, and ignorance, you were polluted with every
 20. 21. 22. kind of wickedness, and sensuality. Remember the professions you
 23. 24. have made as christians, that you would throw off your old habits,
 25. 26. 27. and become new men. All grosser sins against your neighbour—
 28. 29. 30. falshood—theft—excessive anger—corrupt conversation—malice—and
 31. 32. bitterness of every kind, are I hope, among the first heathen practices
 C H A P. you relinquish. Be gentle therefore, and merciful, and kind to
 V. each other; imitating that Saviour, who died to redeem you; and
 that God, who hath forgiven your sins.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Let all impurity likewise be avoided, as well as sins against your
 6. 7. neighbour. The philosopher of this word may excuse impure practices under the name of natural inclinations. But assure yourselves
 8. they are utterly inconsistent with the kingdom of Christ. Suffer

13. 14. 15. 16. I have in these verses, agreeably to the method I follow, just given the scope, and connection of what appears to me the apostle's argument; but I cannot pass by, without remark, that beautiful, and pleasing comparison, which he makes between the growth of a christian, and the natural growth of the human body, "*We are no more children, the sport of passions, and prey of designing men: but we grow up in Him, from whom the whole body is joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, making increase, according to the effectual working of every part; till we come, in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*"

24. St. Paul often speaks of the redemption of man through Christ, as producing a new creation. *Εκτισθεντα* is here used in that sense. Again, in 2 Cor. v. 17. *καινη κτισις* has the same meaning. Again in Gal. vi. 15. and in other places.

3. By *πλεονεξια*, in this verse, inordinate desires seem to be meant. See Dr. Hammond on this place, and Parkhurst's lexicon.—So in the 5th verse, the word *covetous* should be an *unclean person*. As lewdness and idolatry were so much practised together by the heathen, they are often brought together by the apostle.

not

not yourselves again therefore to be involved in that darkness, from which you have been delivered. You have now a glorious light to direct you. But if it does not shew you, that all Gentile impurities are intirely opposite to the spirit of the gospel, you are yet in darkness. Nothing but a direct opposition to these can make you acceptable to God. Abhor therefore all such impurities; which it offends decency even to mention: and consider yourselves as called by the great prophetic voice, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Leave therefore the folly of this world to it’s children; and accommodate yourselves to the wisdom of the next. Too much of your time hath already been spent in sin: be the more earnest to improve what is left. Let the heathen have recourse to riot, and intemperance in their joys: let yours spring from a purer source—gratitude, and thankfulness to God; that true melody of the heart, which nothing earthly can raise.

Let forbearance, humility, and a general submission of your inclinations, and humours to each other, reign among you.

12. The apostle is here probably alluding to the mysteries of the heathen; their *αποφρηται*; and some have observed a farcasm in what he says. He calls them things *not to be spoken of*—but, not because they were too *sacred*; but too *infamous*.

14. It is probable the apostle alludes to several passages in the prophet Isaiah, which bear this sense; tho none of them exactly in these words. The passage most similar is chap. xxvi.
19. But the apostolic writers often quote from memory, and observe the sense, rather than the words.

16. Almost all interpreters consider this verse (*redeeming the time, because the days are evil*) as a lesson of worldly prudence. Persecution will arise against you, therefore act discretely. But I own I cannot see any connection between this sense, and the context.—Besides, it seems to be an unnecessary lesson. The converts, to whom this advice is directed, were so far from discovering too intemperate a zeal for religion; that the apostle found it necessary to caution them even against Jewish rites, and heathen abominations.

18. 19. Many interpreters suppose the apostle is here alluding to the Bacchanalian orgies; and that he prescribed psalms, and hymns, instead of the wild, and frantic songs, which were sung in those processions.

Let

22. 23. 24.
25. 26. 27.
28. 29. 30.
31. 32. 33.

C H A P.

VI.

1. 2. 3. 4.

Let the married state be observed with all sanctity; and be considered as an emblem of the sacred union between Christ, and his church—of that love and tenderness, which flows from one; and of that submission and respect, which are due from the other. †

Let the duties of children and parents be mutually observed. If the former are taught obedience; let the latter lay a foundation for it, in gentleness, and religious instruction.

5. 6. 7. 8.

Let the servant obey his master, not on any worldly principle; but under a sense of his duty to God, from whom he expects his recompence.—On the other hand, let not the master think himself free from obligation: but let him behave on all occasions with humanity to his servant; considering that he also has a Master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons.

10.

11. 12.

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14.

15.

To conclude, my brethren, exert strenuously those endeavours, which will be further aided by the divine grace. You have not only the opposition of wicked men to combat; but must expect also the opposition of wicked spirits. Put on therefore that divine armour, which the gospel hath provided. It will serve you in every exigence. Let truth, honesty, and sincerity surround you like a military belt. Let a good conscience be your breast-plate; and a peaceable disposition, like greaves, defend your steps. But

† The apostle dilates somewhat more on this allusion. Two things seem evidently to have struck his attention. He seems at first to have had nothing in view, but to exhort men to *love their wives*, as *Christ loved the church*: but being struck with this latter idea, which contains the greater truth of the two, he carries on the similitude farther, than he at first seems to have intended.

2. If this be the *first commandment with promise*, says the Popish casuist, then it is plain the second commandment of the decalogue, in which there is a promise likewise, should be abrogated.—May we not, with rather less violence, suppose the apostle means here, a *particular*, or *special* promise? The declaration in the second commandment, that *God will show mercy to thousands that love him, and keep his commandments*, is not specific; but expressed in general terms. It relates to *all* the commands of God in general.

9. *Forbearing threatening*—that is, forbearing that domineering, haughty language, which is so contrary to the spirit of the gospel.

let

let the shield of faith—a firm belief in the truths of religion—
 be your great security against every attack. Crown all with the 17.
 helmet of salvation—the hope of everlasting life: and for your
 offensive arms, take the word of God, which is the sword of 18.
 the Spirit.—In using these divine arms, add constant prayer to God
 for yourselves, and others. And forget not me your apostle in 19. 20.
 your prayers; who am suffering imprisonment for your sake, that
 I may plead the cause of the gospel boldly as I ought.

With regard to all particulars relating to myself, I refer you 21. 22.
 to Tychicus, a faithful minister of Christ, who brings you this
 epistle, and will answer all your questions.

Peace and love be among you all; and the grace of God upon 23. 24.
 all his faithful servants!

16. *Quench all the fiery darts.* The apostle alludes to missile weapons, often used, with burning flax wrapped about them.

18. Bp. Wilkins in his treatise on prayer p. 39, explains the expression, *watching thereunto with all perseverance*, &c. as an instruction to take every opportunity of reading, meditation, company, &c. to gather up constantly proper materials for prayer; which is an *excellent lesson* to a christian, whatever may become of the *interpretation*.

19. *That utterance may be given me*; see a note on 2 Cor. xii. 7, and Gal. iv. 13.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THIS epistle was written from Rome to the christians of Philippi, a city of Macedonia, about the year 62, as is generally supposed, a little before St. Paul was set at liberty. It was sent by Epaphroditus, by whom the apostle had received a contribution from his friends at that place.

He begins, after a salutation full of tenderness, and kindness, to satisfy their questions about his present situation at Rome. He assures them of his perfect resignation—speaks of his deliverance, as a matter of great uncertainty; but rather believes, that it is God's good pleasure, it should take place. He then exhorts them to purity of life—cautions them against Jewish zealots—and kindly accepts the supplies they had sent him.

E P I S T L E

TO THE

P H I L I P P I A N S.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

PAUL, and Timothy, ministers of Christ, to the bishops, deacons, and whole christian church at Philippi; grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!

3. 4. 5. 6.

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10. 11.

Your advancement in the gospel from your first conversion till this time, is the constant subject of my thankfulness to God; who will, I doubt not, preserve you steady in that faith, which you have embraced, till the great day of Christ. I have every reason to hope this of you, as, through the grace of God, you have been partakers with me in defending, and confirming the gospel; and have kindly administered to me in all those sufferings, which I have undergone for it's sake. God knows the love I bear you; and the earnest prayers I make, that you may increase in all christian love, and knowledge; and that being fully convinced of the excellence of that holy faith, which you have embraced, you may abound more, and more, in the fruits it produces to the glory of God; and be found innocent, and sincere members of the church of Christ, in the day of his glorious appearance.

Let

Let me now answer your inquiries, by assuring you, that what-
 ever hath happened to me, hath had a tendency to advance the
 gospel. The occasion of my being sent here a prisoner is now
 well known even in the emperor's court; and hath excited the
 zeal of many to stand forth in the defence of the gospel. I wish
 I could speak as favourably of all. But while there are many
 sincere preachers of God's word, who consider me as a suffering
 minister in his cause; I must add, there are others, who preach
 in opposition to me; mixing Jewish ceremonies with the gospel;
 and are not with-held by knowing the distress they give me.—
Some good effect may however arise from such preaching; and so
 far it will always be matter of joy to me.

As to my present sufferings, I have no doubt, but I shall always
 have reason to consider them through your prayers, and the direc-
 tion of the Holy Spirit, as the means of my happiness. I hope
 also, that I shall persevere with such firmness, that the gospel of
 Christ shall be advanced either by my life, or death. If I live,
 I live in Christ: if I die, I die in hope of everlasting mercy; and
 of setting the seal of martyrdom to the truth of the gospel. Suffer-
 ing it is true awaits me here: yet still my choice is divided. To
 be removed to Christ, is my secret wish: but it may be more ad-
 vantageous to the churches I have planted, to continue longer upon
 earth. And indeed I have persuasion, that this is God's destina-
 tion; and that I shall fulfill that joy, which you express in the
 hope of seeing me again.

15. The apostle does not express whom he meant by these opposers. But it is generally supposed he meant the Jewish converts. The words, *ἐκ αἵματος*, in the sixteenth verse, seems to imply some *impure mixture*; and Judaism was the principal mixture, we know of, that prevailed at that time. In other parts of the epistle also the apostle seems to have allusion to the Jews. See particularly the beginning of chap. iii.

21. If the original be pointed, with a comma after *Χριστός*, the sense will be, *For Christ to me, both in life and death, is gain.*

27. In the mean time, let your lives be such as become the gospel of Christ; that whether I see you, or hear of you only in my absence, I may find that you live in happy unity together; and have emulation in nothing, but in paying obedience to the precepts of the gospel.

28. Nor let any worldly fears, nor worldly adversaries discompose you. The opposition of your enemies marks their hard, and impatient hearts; but brightens your hopes in the mercies of God; 29. 30. purifying your religious principles, as I hope in God it hath done mine, by adding suffering to faith.

CHAP.

II.

1. 2.

3.

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5 6. 7. 8. 9.
10. 11.

12.

If therefore you have any consolation in Christ—any comfort in love—any joy in the Holy Spirit; and in the mercies of God—compleat my hopes in you by continuing in the exercise of christian charity. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory; but in humility of mind, let each esteem his neighbour better than himself; and in every thing consider his neighbour's interest, as his own. Let each of you imitate the example of your blessed Saviour, who took upon himself the lowly form of man; and suffered death upon the cross; tho he was before equal with God; and was afterwards to be exalted to the highest state of glory. While you were under my eye, your religious conduct was ever pleasing to me: let it be equally so in my absence. Conform your actions,

5. I give what appears to me to be the *primary, and argumentative* purport of these verses; which was to recommend *humility* and *charity* by the example of Christ. The difficulties they contain, I have not entered into; hardly any two commentators agreeing in the same precise meaning. The expression, *εχ' απραγμων ηγησαστο το εναυσα θεω*, *he thought it not robbery to be equal to God*, is generally explained, as if he did not covet or desire to appear on earth in the divine glory. See Whitby, and Pyle.—The expression, *God hath highly exalted him*, is supposed to refer to the exaltation of Christ's *human nature*—his *divine nature* being in the form of God.—But perhaps there is no great wisdom in examining too deeply into these high points, which must for ever be above us. *Nescire velle, quæ magister optimus nescire nos vult, eruditia est.*

with

with caution, and godly fear, to the precepts of the gospel. At the same time be assured, that God's Holy Spirit will never fail to assist your endeavours. Be particularly careful to suffer no harshness, nor animosity of any kind to enter into your disputes—that your adversaries may throw as little imputation as possible upon you—and that you may at least be considered as blameless, and irreproachable among those, who will always be ready to take hold of every thing in their power; in the midst of whom I wish you to shine as lights in the world: so that having passed your christian pilgrimage upon earth, I may rejoice in the day of Christ, at the success of my ministry among you. Nay if I should even now be offered up as a sacrifice for my labours in the gospel, I, as well as you, ought to make it matter of joy.

I trust in Christ, that I shall soon be able to send Timothy to Philippi, through whom I shall obtain some certain intelligence of you. I have no one here, on whom I can equally depend. I see among all too much attachment to themselves; and too little to

13.

14.

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17. 18.

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13. It seems to be the constant doctrine of scripture, (expressed in this verse among other passages) that the Spirit of God, in a manner, makes a part of us, and is disposed to act uniformly upon all mankind, who use the means prescribed in scripture to obtain this powerful aid; among which fervent prayer is the chief.—How far God may favour his faithful servants in their exigencies with particular aids, we know not. In general, however it seems to be the language, rather of enthusiasm, than of reason, and scripture, that the Holy Spirit of God assists us by partial, desultory illapses. But as we are told, that *without God we can do no good thing*, it seems probable that the Spirit of God is never intirely quenched in the breasts even of the worst of men. If it was, they could never repent.—We are told in the text, to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us*. The reason is plain, lest by our *not working for ourselves*, we should lose the assistance of God, which will decay, more, and more, as we neglect the gracious admonitions of the Holy Spirit.—As to the phrase, that *God worketh in us to will, and to do of his good pleasure*, it appears, from the whole sense of the passage, that he does not act in an arbitrary manner, (for then it would be absurd for us to work ourselves) but only, that it is his good pleasure, that he works for us at all.

15. *Shine as lights*. The word *φωσισμός*, retained light, I believe, is commonly used to express that kind of light, which is intended to direct mariners.

the

23. 24. the gospel. But he with the affection of a child, hath been dutifully attentive to me, as you have often had opportunity to observe. I shall wait however to see what will be the event of my trial here; and if I cannot come myself, I shall send him.

25. In the mean time, I thought it proper to send back to you, your messenger, Epaphroditus with this letter, who has delivered your supplies safely to me; and whom I consider as my fellow-labourer, and a minister to me from you. He has been greatly distressed at finding you had heard of his sickness. He hath indeed been so ill, that his life was despaired of: but it hath pleased God to restore him, which I consider as an act of mercy to me, as well as to him. I send him therefore the more speedily, that you may not wait long in suspense; and that I may also rejoice the sooner in your joy at seeing him. I need not exhort you to receive him joyfully; and to treat him, and all such pastors, with respect. He hath hazarded his life for Christ's sake, in the execution of your kind commission to assist me.

CHAP.

III.

1. 2.

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.—And yet before I conclude, let me exhort you again, as it may make a stronger impression, not to suffer yourselves to be misled by those Jewish zealots, who would enforce circumcision, as necessary to salvation: but to consider the church of Christ, as the true church of God; which, instead of placing any confidence in outward ceremonies, trusts in Jesus Christ alone, and worships God in truth. No man surely can have more reason to trust in Jewish privileges than I have.

27. From circumstances of this kind, we see the apostles had not always inherent in them the power of healing the sick: otherwise it might be supposed, that Paul would have healed this useful minister of the church.

28. *σπευδαισπεως*, is rendered better by *hastily*, or *speedily*, than *carefully*.

1. It seems as if the apostle had intended to conclude his epistle here. His saying, he proposed to send away Epaphroditas *σπευδαισπεως*, seems to imply it. But the idea of the Jewish zealots intervening, carries him farther into length.

I was

I was born, initiated, and educated in the Jewish church with every circumstance of exactness. I afterward, embraced one of it's strictest sects; and opposing all it's adversaries, was a most rigid observer of it's ceremonies. But these things, on which I once so greatly valued myself, I now totally reject, for the sake of the gospel. Every thing I consider as trifling in the comparison. All I had in the world I gave up for Christ; giving up also every idea of acceptance through the Mosaic law; trusting solely in the promises of the gospel—acknowledging the amazing truth of Christ's resurrection—and following his blessed steps, that I might through him, rise again to a glorious immortality. The prize is set before me. I have not yet attained it. I am not yet perfected. But I keep my eye fixed on the great end. I forget every thing behind; and looking steadily at the point before me, I press towards the mark—that glorious mark of eternal life, which the gospel presents.

Let me exhort you all therefore to adhere firmly to this truth—that salvation depends only on the gospel. But if any have not yet gotten intirely over his Jewish scruples, let him not be discouraged: God will, by degrees, remove them. Let those, in the mean time, whose faith is purer, continue steadily in it; following the example, which we, and their other pastors, have set them. Thus while they, who are enemies of the cross of Christ (whom I have often with great distress mentioned to you) spend their lives in worldly gratifications, to which they are totally given up; let us have our conversation in heaven; expecting that great day, when these vile bodies shall take a glorious form; and through the power of God be totally rendered subservient to him.—Let this great consideration weigh with you to continue firm in the faith

21.
C H A P.
IV.
1.

'8. *Suffered the loss of all things.* The original word respects chiefly that kind of loss, which mariners suffer, when they throw their goods into the sea, to save their lives.

2. you have professed. To Euodias, and Syntyche in particular I
 3. direct this exhortation. I beseech also my worthy colleague, together
 with Clement, and others my faithful fellow-labourers in the gospel,
 to assist these women, who have shewn such piety in their services
 to us.

4. I now again conclude, exhorting you to rejoice in the Lord,
 5. under all your distresses. Let your moderation be evident to all.
 Every controversy will soon be carried from an earthly to a heavenly
 6. tribunal. Be not therefore anxious about worldly affairs; but lay all
 7. your requests before God, never omitting thanksgiving for past
 mercies. And may the peace of God, which can be felt only, not
 8. described, keep both your affections, and your understanding in a
 blessed composure through Christ! For the sake of all those virtues,
 which adorn the christian profession, think deeply of these things;
 and let me have the happiness of hoping, that both my precepts,
 9. and example have tended to impress them upon you.

10. Your kind care in administering to my necessities (which I well
 know would have exerted itself sooner, if an earlier opportunity
 had fallen out) hath afforded me great matter of religious joy. I
 11. value it more as an instance of your affection, than as a supply of
 my wants. As to myself, I have learned in whatever state I am, to
 12. 13. be content. Through Christ, that strengthens me, I am prepared

2. These two women might probably live in Jewish families; or their relations might be judaizing christians; or they might be connected with heathen families.

3. It is not well known whom the apostle means by the phrase *true yoke-fellow*. To say he means his wife, as some have said, is absurd; as he himself tells us he was unmarried.

3. *Whose names are in the book of life*. We need not suppose, that St. Paul literally means these persons to be beyond a possibility of falling: but only that their present behaviour was such, as was acceptable to God; and would insure their salvation, if they persevered in it.

4. See chap. iii. 1, and the note——The sense would be stronger, if the pause in the original were placed after *κυριας*. It would then be, *Rejoice in the Lord: I say always rejoice*.

for

for every adversity. But still your kindness is very pleasing to me, 14. 15. 16.
 as it was also at Thessalonica: for since I left Macedonia, I have
 received no assistance from any church, but yours. Yet I value 17.
 it not so much, as I said, because it afforded a supply to my wants;
 as because it was a grateful instance of your love. Assure your- 18.
 selves, that what you have sent by Epaphroditus, is a sufficient
 supply for all my necessities: and, what is more, a sacrifice accep- 19.
 table to God; from whom you are to look for your return in the 20.
 mercies of the gospel; and to whom for all his tender care to us,
 be attributed all glory, and honour, for ever, and ever, Amen!

Salute all the brethren, who are with you; and receive the 21. 22.
 salutation of all here, particularly of our brethren in Cæsar's court.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen! 23.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

from whom the whole land
bottom for ever, and every
one who will see you, and
the whole world will be
in Christ, and you will

be
in
the
land

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

EPISTLE TO THE. COLOSSIANS.

THIS epistle is supposed to have been written about the time, when the epistle to the Philippians was written; a little before the apostle's release from his imprisonment at Rome; and it appears to have been sent at the same time, with the epistle to Philemon.

St. Paul first expresses his joy at the favourable accounts he had received of the perseverance, and piety of the Colossian church. He then enlarges upon the mercies of redemption—and cautions his readers against deceivers—against judaizing principles; and other species of false doctrine. He draws a picture of christians acting uniformly under the influence of the gospel, both in their public, and private capacities; and concludes with general instructions, and salutations.

E P I S T L E

T O T H E

C O L O S S I A N S.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the appointment of God, and Timothy, to the christian church at Colosse, grace, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!

3. 4.

Ever since I heard of your faith in Christ; and of that charity, which it produced among you, I have given thanks to God; and have offered up my constant prayers for your advancement in all

5. 6.

holiness. You have now attained that heavenly hope in the gospel; which hath wrought in you, as it hath in others, who have

7.

embraced it, the fruits of righteousness; ever since it was preached

8.

to you by our beloved Epaphras, who hath been a faithful minister among you; and hath made me happy by a recital of that christian

9. 10.

charity, which on all occasions you discover. It is the constant subject therefore of my prayers to God, that you may abound more

11.

and more in all christian knowledge—and in the virtues of a holy life: that being strengthened by the hand of God, you may be enabled to bear with patience the trials of the world.

12. 13. 14.

In every thing therefore give thanks to God; but particularly for his having delivered you from heathen darkness—for your redemption

demption through Christ—the forgiveness of your sins—and the prospect before you of everlasting happiness.

Consider then with reverence the great work of your redemption—who hath performed it; and what hath been performed.—The author of this great work is no less than the Son of God, the image of the invisible Father, existing before all creation. By him all things in heaven, and earth were created: and through him they are preserved. It is this great Saviour, who is the head of the christian church; and who by his resurrection from the dead, hath shewn his power over death; thus giving us the assurance of immortality. For it hath pleased God to invest him with full power; and to accept his death on the cross, as the means of reconciling to himself all created beings both in heaven, and on earth.—Of this blessed society you now make a part. Tho once alienated from God by your wickedness; you are now reconciled to him, in purity, and holiness, through the death of Christ; if you steadily persevere in that faith, which you have received; and in that hope, which hath been set before you.

For myself, who am graciously appointed by God, the minister of the gospel, I can truly say, I rejoice in the sufferings, which I undergo for it's sake; and in compleating those prophecies, which foretold that the servants of Christ, should suffer after his death. My commission indeed reaches chiefly to you, the Gentile part of that church, to whom I open the redemption of the world by Christ—a mystery hitherto kept secret from mankind; but now revealed to all, both Jews, and Gentiles; to whom God is pleased to make known his gracious intention of offering salvation to all

15. Erasmus, and other commentators, do not translate *πρωτογονος* the *first-born*, but the *first producer*.

24. This is the interpretation, which Dr. Clarke gives of this verse. See his sermons, vol. I. p. 274.

through

28. through Jesus Christ. This holy gospel I have preached; warn-
 ing the disobedient not to reject so kind an offer—instructing the
 29. pious in that heavenly wisdom, which will lead them to everlasting
 C H A P. life—and exercising among you those spiritual gifts, with which
 II. God for this purpose hath endowed me.—For you, and the
 {
 1. church of Laodicea; and all, among whom I have not personally
 2. preached the gospel, I am under particular anxiety: wishing you
 all spiritual comfort from the exercise of charity among yourselves—
 from a perfect knowledge of the religion you have embraced—
 3. and from a liberty to profess openly the name of Christ; in whom
 the divine power, and knowledge equally reside.
4. Take care therefore lest you be seduced by artful, and worldly
 5. men. For tho I am absent from you, my heart is continually
 with you; and I have a constant eye over your faith, and manners.
6. 7. Persevere in your profession. Trust only in Christ for all your
 hopes of pardon, and future happiness; with all thankfulness re-
 ceiving the inestimable blessing, which God hath vouchsafed unto
 you. In a particular manner, let me warn you against the rea-
 8. sonings, and philosophy of men; which will only lead you into
 vain, and unprofitable disquisitions: and let me exhort you to
 9. rest in that Holy Saviour, of whose divinity you are fully assured,
 10. tho he was revealed humbly in the flesh. In him, the Author of
 11. 12. all heavenly grace, you are compleat. The blessings of his church
 are conferred upon you, through faith, and repentance. As cir-
 cumcision was the sign of God's covenant with the Jews; so is
 baptism with you. By this rite, you are buried, as it were, with
 13. Christ; and raised again, in allusion to his resurrection. For under
 14. the gospel you are considered as having been dead in sin; but
 raised to life through Christ; who forgives your sin—supercedes

12. The mode of administering baptism by immersion, as was formerly practised, is here alluded to.

those rites, and ceremonies, by which the Jews held their claim to God's peculiar favour—and having vanquished the power of Satan, hath triumphed openly over him. Pay no attention therefore to those, who maintain the necessity of Jewish observances. The mosaic ceremonies were mere shadows, and types of Christ.—Neither be deceived by an affectation of humility in the adoration of angels; which arises from the arrogance of human reason, intruding into subjects beyond it's reach, without resting on any authority; and giving up the intercession of Christ—the only real intercession, through which we are taught to approach the Father. Through him the whole body of christians are united as under one head; and from him they receive all their supply of spiritual nourishment.—If then you are to consider yourselves as dead to the

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19.
20. 21. 22.
23.

15. This, in the opinion of many judicious interpreters, refers to the abridged power of the devil, after christianity was established, agreeably to what our Saviour himself says, *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* Luke x. 18.

16. The *sabbaths* here mentioned are not the seventh-day sabbaths; but Jewish festivals.

18. Making intercession through angels, under the pretence of not daring to apply directly to God, was a heresy (derived in part perhaps from the Platonic philosophers) which obtained early in the christian churches of Greece. About the third century a canon was made at Laodicea against those, who maintained this doctrine, under the name of *Angelici*—It would be somewhat surprizing after this, that the papists should broach anew an old discarded error of apostolic times, and hold it with such inflexible obstinacy, if the history of mankind did not shew in numberless other instances, that tenacity in the minds of men, especially when united in society, with which they persevere in holding errors, they have once adopted; tho one should suppose, that in their own minds they cannot but condemn them.

20. Here the apostle seems to draw his conclusion from what he had said in the 12th, and 13th verses.

23. In explaining this verse, I confess I have been chiefly led by the sound of the words; for, I own, I cannot understand the sense by the help of any commentator I have seen. The best interpreter, I think, is Whitby; who produces long quotations from Josephus, Philo, and other writers, to shew that the apostle alludes to the opinions, and practices of the Essenes. See also Dr. Prideaux on this subject, part II. b. V. p. 365.

C H A P.

III.

1. 2.

world through Christ; why, as if living in the world, should you still be subject to these carnal ordinances, with regard to meats, and other things, which are now entirely abrogated; and depend on the mere authority of man? Why should you pay any attention either to those other extravagances I have just mentioned with regard to angel-worship? All these things, whatever specious pretences they may hold out, are certainly both dishonourable to God; and unsatisfactory to man. Through Christ's resurrection you are raised to the hope of eternal life. The great conclusion therefore is, that you should set your affections on *heavenly*, not on *earthly* things. In this world you are dead: you must consider your life as laid up with Christ, in his blessed keeping, till the great day shall restore it to everlasting happiness.

3. 4.

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10. 11.

12.

13.

Under a sense then of these high expectations, purify all those gross affections, and appetites, which have ever drawn the wrath of God upon mankind; and which you indulged, like other heathen, before your conversion. Divest your minds also of wrath, and malice—your conversation of railing, lewdness, and falsehood: always remembering, that you are now to consider your nature as totally changed. All your old habits must be laid aside; and habits intirely new taken up, after the example of your blessed Saviour; in whom all distinctions are now lost, which country, education, or condition of life, makes among men.

Consider yourselves therefore in the light of God's holy servants; and instead of those worldly lusts, and passions, which your profession forbids, cloath yourselves with affection to each other; with humility, meekness, gentleness, and forbearance; forgiving each

3. It is a beautiful image to consider our lives, as treasures, locked up with Christ in heaven.

other, and remembering the many sins, which Christ hath forgiven you. Let charity, which is the bond of all virtues, as uniting them together, be the principal badge of your profession. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and influence you, as one body, in performing acts of gratitude and praise. Let the doctrines of the gospel be the leading principles of your hearts. Let them inspire your *common intercourse*, with holy conversation—your *public meetings*, with spiritual hymns. Let them regulate your words, and actions; and make your whole lives one course of joy, and thankfulness to God through Christ.

In the mean time, let not your *private* affections be lost in *general* notions of christian charity. Let the wife pay a proper submission to her husband—and the husband a due regard to his wife. Let children obey their parents, as God hath enjoined: and let parents treat their children with that kindness, which may secure their affection. Let the servant obey his master, not on mere worldly principles; but in obedience to God, from whom he must expect the reward of his services. Let him consider himself as the servant of Christ; who has the same regard for him, as for his master; to whom, as well as to his master, he is certainly accountable for his wrong behaviour. Let the master also treat the servant with justice, and kindness; remembering always that he too has a Master in heaven.

Let me conclude with exhorting you earnestly to constant, and fervent prayer; never forgetting to add *thanksgiving* to your *peti-*

C H A P.
IV.
1.

22. The servants St. Paul here means were slaves, many of whom had embraced christianity. Whether those converts had any idea, that a conversion to christianity was a manumission; or whether the apostle had compassion on their station, he often dwells on topics of advice, and comfort to them.

tions. And in your prayers let me be remembered—that, altho I am now a prisoner for the gospel, I may still be permitted to open it to mankind, in what manner God thinks best.

5. Act prudently in your intercourse towards those, who profess not the gospel; redeeming the time, which you yourselves have
6. lost, when you were unbelievers. Be as discrete also in your words, as in your actions. Let every thing you say, be said in the spirit of the gospel; whether you answer your private adversary; or give your testimony in public.

7. 8. 9. With Onesimus, who is now become a faithful brother, I send Tychicus; from whom you may receive every information with regard to me; and through whom I hope to have a pleasing return of information from you.

10. 11. Aristarchus, Mark the nephew of Barnabas, (whom I before recommended to you) and Justus, send their salutations. Of all the Jews now in Rome, these three only have been of assistance to me in the gospel.

12. 13. 14. Of the Gentile christians, Luke the physician, Demas, and Epaphras join in the same salutation—Epaphras in particular, your worthy minister; in whose prayers you are always remembered; and whose zeal for you, and the churches in your neighbourhood, is unbounded.

15. Salute in our names, all the brethren at Laodicea; particularly
16. Nymphas; and the church in his house. Let this epistle be read
to

9. This Onesimus is supposed to be Philemon's slave, whom St. Paul converted. See his epistle to Philemon.

14. Demas on some worldly account, left the apostle. See 2 Tim. iv. 10. But it depends on the dates of this epistle, and of the second to Timothy, whether he left the apostle, before he is here mentioned, or after.

16. What epistle from Laodicea this was, is not known. It was probably some epistle, which that church wrote to the apostle on subjects, which he thought might be useful among the

to the church of Laodicea ; and do you read the epistle from thence : 17.
and warn Archippus to pay great attention to the ministry he has
received.

With my kind remembrance of you all, I sign this epistle with 18.
my own hand. Forget not my sufferings in the gospel. The grace
of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all ; Amen !

the Colossian christians ; and therefore he returned it with his own, to Colosse.—Others think
that the epistle to the Ephesians was a kind of circular epistle, of which the church of Laodicea
had a copy.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

P R E F A C E.

T O T H F

TWO EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THESE two epistles are supposed to have been written from Corinth; and Dr. Lardner imagines they were the first, which St. Paul wrote. I think this rather unlikely from the conclusion of the former: *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand; which is the token in every epistle.*—But it is a matter of little moment.

In the former of these epistles, the apostle expresses himself much pleased with the behaviour of his new converts. He exhorts them to continue steadily in their profession, by dwelling on the opposition, and difficulties he had met with in converting them—and on the disinterested affection he had always shewn them. He warns them against those heathen impurities, which they had so lately relinquished. He inculcates brotherly love; and settles some points with regard to the resurrection; on which subject several erroneous opinions had obtained. Lastly, he exhorts them to vigilance, and perseverance; and concludes with general instructions.

In the second epistle he encourages his converts still further in steadiness, and perseverance; takes up the argument again with regard to the false opinions, which prevailed about the resurrection; and concludes with advising them to give no colour to an objection, commonly made against christians, from their being disposed to idleness.

FIRST EPISTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4.

5.

6.

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10.

CHAP.

II.

1. 2.

PAUL, Silas, and Timothy to the christian church established at Thessalonica, grace, and peace through God, and Christ !

It is not without sincere thanksgiving to God, that we remember your faith, and charity ; your patience, and hope in that holy religion, into which you have been called—a religion, which has not only been preached to you ; but proved by the gift of the Holy Ghost ; and by the miracles, which we were enabled to work among you. Impressed by these things you embraced it steadily ; and were able to bear the afflictions it brought upon you, through the inward joys, which it produced : insomuch, that you became examples to all the faithful in Macedonia, and Achaia : and not there only, but in all other places, your faith is spoken of ; and that ready zeal acknowledged, with which you received the messengers of truth ; turning from idols, to embrace the only true God ; and expecting the gracious promises of the gospel, on the foundation of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

What difficulties attended our first labours among you, you well know ; and how zealously we preached the gospel, notwithstanding

1. 2. See Acts xvi. 17.

the violent opposition we met with. You are witnesses also with
 what purity, and guileless sincerity we exhorted you, to continue
 in the faith. In this great work, which is intrusted to us, we
 have acted as men, who are accountable to that God, who knoweth
 the heart. We never adapted our doctrine to any indirect views
 either of ourselves, or of others: we fought neither praise, nor
 profit. No burden of any kind laid we upon you; but treated you,
 on all occasions, with parental tendernefs; and were ready, if it
 had been the will of God, to have given our lives for your sake.
 You well remember how laboriously we earned our daily bread
 among you, that our preaching might be free from every interested
 appearance. To you we appeal—to God also—how holily, and
 justly we lived among you; and with what purity of manners:
 exhorting you, with a father's gentleness, to live in steady obedience
 to that holy religion, which you had embraced.

Nor were our endeavours fruitless. We thank God, that you
 received the gospel, not as a human institution; but as a gift from
 heaven; imitating the example of the earliest churches in Christ;
 which were established in Judea. Like them also you were per-
 secuted by your own brethren. After the Jews had killed their own
 prophets, and put to death the Lord Jesus, *we* had nothing to expect
 from them but the extremity of persecution. And we received it in
 full measure—partly indeed on your account; for one of the great
 causes of their malice to us, was our preaching the gospel to the
 Gentiles.—But the measure of their iniquity is now full.

In these, and all your persecutions, I would I were able to com-
 fort you by my presence, as well as by my epistle. It was my
 intention indeed, more than once, to have visited you: but I have

18. Satan is often put for an adversary, or opposer. *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

19. 20. been detained here by ill-disposed persons. My affections are always with you : for nothing is to me a matter of such joy, as the hope of presenting you holy before God, in the great day.

C H A P.
III.

1. 2. 3.

4. This strong affection impelling me, as I could not myself leave Athens, I sent Timothy to you, to establish your faith ; and to encourage you to undergo, with christian fortitude, those persecutions for the cross of Christ, which, you are well informed, we must all prepare ourselves to suffer. So early, as when I was last with you, I assured you of this, and we have now experienced it.
5. I feared lest these trials of your faith might have been too severe for you ; and, in my tenderness, I could not forbear sending
6. 7. Timothy to inquire after your situation. His return, with the joyful account of your faith, and charity, and affectionate remembrance of me, hath dispelled all my fears ; and given me joy in the midst of my distresses. I feel myself revived by your steadiness ;
8. and I give thanks to God for the joyful accounts I have heard of
9. you ; praying night, and day, that I may be permitted to see you ;
10. and make up every deficiency in your faith. May the Lord God,
11. 12. and our Saviour Christ direct my way unto you ! and make you increase more and more in kindness, and love ; that you may have
13. holy confidence in that day, when our blessed Lord shall appear in glory !

C H A P.
IV.

1. 2. 3.

4. 5. Let me then beseech you, my brethren, and earnestly exhort you, to observe strictly that rule of duty, which you have received. You remember the injunctions we laid upon you against those vices, which are practised in Gentile countries—against fornication in particular. A much purer life will be expected from you, than from the ignorant heathen. You know, that these impurities cannot be

4. Bowyer conjectures, that *οικου* should be written *σκηνη*, *his tabernacle*—that is, his body.

practised without injury to others, as well as yourselves. You know also, as we have often warned you, that they will draw the judgment of God upon you. God hath called the christian to purity of life. The impure christian therefore not only despises the law of man; but the law of God also, and the impulse of his Holy Spirit.

With regard to brotherly love, I need not say any thing to you. Your own hearts inform you, that this duty is impressed upon you, by a greater teacher than I am, even by God himself. And indeed I have nothing to charge you with on this head: I shall only exhort you, that in this, and all other christian virtues, you may increase more, and more.

I could wish you also to intermeddle as little as possible, with the affairs of the heathen people, among whom you live. Follow industriously your own callings; and shew your Gentile neighbours, that you mean not to be a useless burthen upon them.

With regard to your deceased brethren, I hope your christian faith will keep your sorrow within bounds. If you believe the resurrection of Christ, you cannot doubt of theirs: and whether we be alive, at that great day; or whether we be dead, it matters not; when Christ shall come to judgment, all the faithful shall be united with him. Let this be your consolation. But at what time these great events shall be brought about, is a matter, which we are no way concerned to know. One thing we all know, that the day

C H A P.
V.
1.
2.

6. The phrases to go *beyond*, and *defraud* have reference, according to the best commentators, to the impurities mentioned before. Impurities of this kind certainly involve others in guilt, as well as ourselves—*In any matter*, may be better translated, *in this matter*.

11. It was one of the great objections, which the heathen made to christianity, that it was an idle profession. Tertull. apol. cap. 42.

17. I do not pretend to understand this very difficult passage; and therefore I have given it a general signification. Indeed I think it is rather presuming to endeavour to explain it.

3. of the Lord will come like *a thief in the night*; and find the world
 4. in a state of full security.—God forbid, my brethren, that you
 5. 6. should be thus found! You are the children of the day. Preserve that
 7. character. Be vigilant, and attentive. Night is the season of sloth
 8. and riot. With these things the children of the day are at variance.
 Be you, like good centinels, always under arms; girt round with
 the breast-plate of faith, and love; and taking the hope of salvation
 9. for a helmet—that hope, which was purchased for us by our
 10. Lord Jesus Christ; who died for our sins, and is the great foundation
 of our comfort, and happiness, both in this world, and the next.
 11. Let these things therefore fortify you in your spiritual warfare.
 Continue to exhort, and strengthen each other.
12. Fail not in a due respect to those, who are your spiritual guides;
 13. and esteem them for the sake of their labour.—Be at peace among
 14. yourselves. Rebuke the disorderly. Encourage the humble. Assist
 15. the weak. Shew forbearance to all. Return not evil for evil;
 but be kind, and affectionate, not only among yourselves, but to
 16. 17. 18. others. Let holy joy fill your hearts. Let it continually break
 19. out in prayers, and praises; and thus confirm in yourselves, more
 20. 21. and more, the grace of God.—Attend to preaching; but prove
 22. the doctrine by the word of God.—Abstain from the very appear-

“ *We who are alive, says the apostle, shall not prevent them which are asleep—and the dead in Christ, shall rise first.*” These passages apparently relate to some great event, at the consummation of all things. And tho we have other hints, in different parts of scripture, particularly in the Revelations (xx. 4, 5, 6.) which seem relative to the same event; yet the whole is so obscure, that I think we ought to be very cautious in our interpretations.

19. *Quench not the Spirit*, Lord Barrington (Misc. fac. vol. I. p. 140) ingeniously supposes this expression alludes to the flame of fire, under which appearance the Spirit originally descended.

21. It appears from the beginning of the second chapter of the next epistle, that false teachers had already begun to infuse their doctrines.

ance of evil : and may the God of peace sanctify you ; so that you
may be pure, and holy at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ; in
whose gracious promises let us continually trust.—Make us the
constant subject of your prayers. Salute all the brethren in our
name ; and let this epistle be read in your assembly.

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28.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen !

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.



SECOND EPISTLE

T O T H E

THESSALONIANS.



CHAP.

I.



1. 2.

PAUL, Silas, and Timothy to the christian church at Thessalonica, grace, mercy, and peace from God, the Father; and the Lord Jesus Christ!

With thankfulness to God we hear of the increase of your faith, and charity; and we mention every where that christian spirit, with which you bear persecution, as an example to all the churches of Christ. And herein, my brethren, are the righteous judgments of God fulfilled. They who persecute you, shall draw a punishment on themselves; and you who are persecuted, shall receive that rest from your labours, which the Lord shall give you at the last great day. He will then punish the wicked, and disobedient as they deserve; and will receive his saints into mansions of never-

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5. *Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment, &c.* That is, we conclude from your innocent sufferings here, that God must be a righteous judge hereafter; and set all things to rights.

8. This punishment seems to include both those, who act contrary to the light of nature, and that of revelation.

ending

11. ending glory. We pray therefore, that your faith may bring you off conquerors in all your trials; and that you may be found worthy of acceptance with God—that the gospel of Christ may be glorified by you, and you by it, through the grace of God.

12.
C H A P.
II.

1. 2. 3.

And now, my brethren, I beseech you not to regard the deceptions of those, who would persuade you, that the day of judgment is at hand. Before that day, the church hath many a fiery trial to pass through: and among other kinds of opposition, prophane, and blasphemous attempts will be made to set up the creature, in the room of the Creator. You may remember, that I told you of these things, when I was with you. They shall not speedily come to pass; but all of them shall be revealed in due time. This opposition to the truth hath already begun to work; and will continue; tho it may be prevented for a time. At length the wicked opposers of the truth shall be finally beaten down; who with all the arts, and deceptions of Satan, beguiled others; after having first rejected the truth themselves. As they have *pleasure* in wickedness, they will be, for that reason deserted by God; and left a prey to their own delusions.

11. *The good pleasure of God's goodness* is a strong expression of the divine benevolence.

1. *By the coming, and by our gathering*, should be translated, *About the coming, or concerning, &c.*

2. *Nor by letter*: as if they had put some false glosses on his former epistle.

4. See this passage, with regard to *the man of sin*, applied to the papal power, by Bp. Newton in his *Diff. on Proph.*—and by Bp. Hurd in his eleventh sermon on prophecy; and expressly treated by Dr. Benson in his *Dissertation on the man of sin.*—Σεισάσμα may apply to any thing held in high reverence.

7. They who interpret these passages of scripture, of the papal power, suppose that the power that *with-holdeth* or *letteth*, is the Roman government. When that should be dissolved, the Roman hierarchy should supply its place. Tertullian, Augustine, and Chrysostom all agree in saying that Anti-Christ should not appear, till after the fall of the Roman empire.

8. *Wicked.* Ἄνομοι, *lawless*. It is remarkable, that the pope in the canon-law is said to be, *Omni lege humanā solutus.*—*Nec totus clerus, nec totus mundus potest judicare papam.*—*Consume* (ἀναλυσαι) to *waste by little, and little.*

12. *Damned.* Κριθῶσι; *judged.*

For you, my brethren, in the mean time, we give thanks to God. From the first of our publication of the gospel to you, you listened to the truth; and fully believing it, were sanctified through the Spirit. By us you have been called to salvation: let us then exhort you to stand fast in all the doctrines you have received: and may the merciful, and gracious God, and Jesus Christ, on whom all our hopes depend, comfort, and establish you in all goodness.

Finally, my brethren, pray for us, that the word of God may have as free a course among the Gentiles here, as it hath had among you: and that God would, in his good time, deliver us from the persecutions of such as oppose the truth. He is the only foundation of trust. In him we have confidence, that you will live up to the religion you have received. May your hearts be filled with the love of God, and the patient expectation of the coming of Christ!

And now, my brethren, let me, with apostolic authority, in-join you to withdraw yourselves from every person of your society, who behaves so as to scandalize his profession. In *our* behaviour I am persuaded you will find nothing, which we may not propose as an example. Remember how we laboured, each in his profession, that we might not be chargeable to others; not claiming any exemption as ministers of the gospel, which we might have done; but rather choosing to make ourselves an example; instructing each of you, that *he who will not work, hath no right to eat*. And we are sorry to hear, there are any among you, who by troubling themselves more with other people's affairs, than their own, need this reproof.—For the future, we command them, on the

15. In the original, the word *παράδοσις*, or *traditions*, is used; but the papist will remember, that by *traditions* nothing is here meant, but *instruction immediately from the mouth of an apostle*.

8. See a note on 1 Thess. iv. 12.

13. authority of Christ, to work quietly for their own maintenance :
14. and do you set them a proper example. If they still continue
refractory, bring them to shame by separating them from your
15. assemblies ; still however observing the end of reproof, which is
only to reclaim.
16. 17. May the God of peace fill you with all peace ! The Lord be
with you ! I write this salutation with my own hand ; as my
usual signature in all my epistles.
18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all ; Amen !
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17. This *token in every epistle* might be a mean to prevent imposition, as many false epistles were probably written in the apostle's name.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

TWO EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY.

IN the first of these epistles the apostle, having reminded Timothy of the early charge, that had been committed to him in preaching the gospel, gives him particular instructions—with regard to public devotions, and assemblies—with regard to the behaviour of women—and of pastors; to whom he recommends a proper mode of opposing errors. He then instructs him with regard to the government of the church; and concludes with an exhortation to particular duties.

He begins the second epistle with pastoral exhortations; and presses the necessity of avoiding trifling disputes, which draw men aside from the great points of religion: concluding with an account of the adversaries, which he himself had met with.

Both these epistles were written to one of the first christian bishops; and contain the great outlines, both of the episcopal office, and of that of all the other ministers of the church of Christ.

FIRST EPISTLE

O F

ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAP.

I.

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6. 7.

PAUL, an apostle by the immediate appointment of God, unto Timothy my son in the faith; grace, mercy, and peace, through our Saviour Jesus Christ!

When I went into Macedonia, I left you at Ephesus to have an eye on certain teachers, whose discourses to the people were made up of such trifling matter, as administered nice questions, rather than real improvement. I desired you to press home on all your converts, that the great end of religion is charity; proceeding from an honest heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith: which doctrine, easy as it is, hath been perverted by many, who set up to teach, what they do not understand.

4. St. Paul, in this verse, and afterwards, speaks particularly against that attention, which the Jews paid to genealogies. It was carried among them to a very great height. Jerome, somewhere speaking on this subject, says, *They were as well acquainted with genealogies from Adam to Zerubbabel, as with their own names.* This attention to genealogies was at first necessary in ascertaining the descent of Christ; and the completion of the prophecies. It then tended only to draw the mind from more useful pursuits.—Afterwards the Jewish converts were studious to claim kindred with Christ. To this also the apostle might perhaps allude.

Nor

Nor do they represent us fairly. We by no means despise the law. We consider the ceremonial part of it as an introduction to christianity: and the moral law—not indeed as able to justify mankind—but as the means of restraining wickedness. This, you know, hath ever been the tenor of that doctrine, which I have taught, through the mercy of God, who hath enabled me to teach it; tho I was formerly one of it's greatest persecutors. But God had mercy on my ignorance; and shed his grace upon me; making me an example of that great truth, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and holding me out as a wonderful instance of his mercy, through Christ—a subject, on which the praise and gratitude of sinners can never be exhausted.

Let me intreat you then again to press home the true doctrines of christianity as an able minister, under the appointment of the Holy Spirit of God. Let it be your constant doctrine, that faith, and a good life must go hand in hand; and that where the latter is wanting, the former can never exist. Among these defective christians may be numbered Hymeneus, and Alexander; whom I have treated with such severity, as, I hope, will lead them to repentance.

But to be more particular in my directions to you; I exhort you, first, in your religious assemblies, to pray for all mankind; and among them for the princes, under whose government you live, that you may be allowed the profession of your religion. This is agreeable to the spirit of that gospel, which is extended to *all*

C H A P.
II.

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18. The word *παραγγελια*, I think, shews, that this verse has reference to the 3d, and 5th verses of this chapter, in which the same word is used.

1. I should suppose the words *δησεις*, *προσευχας*, and *επειξεις* are not synonymous; tho it may be difficult to affix a proper meaning to each. The first perhaps signifies *prayer in our necessities*—the second, *the deprecation of evil*—and the third, *intercession for others*.

mankind.

4. 5. *mankind*. For, as there is one God; so there is one mediator,
 6. 7. who laid down his life for *all*. And it is indeed to the Gentile
 8. part of the world, however opposite this doctrine may be to Jewish
 prejudices, that I am appointed an apostle. It is not therefore
 only in a Jewish temple, or synagogue, where the prayers of the
 righteous are heard; I injoin christians to hold their public assem-
 blies in all places; and to pray for all mankind, without animosity,
 and prejudice.

9. 10. Exhort also your female converts to modesty of apparel; to cloath
 11. 12. 13. themselves with christian virtues, instead of costly attire: and let
 14. them not preach in your assemblies; nor do any thing contrary
 15. to the original subjection, which they owe to man. I mean not
 however to encourage any usefess austerities. A state of marriage
 is very consistent with a state of salvation: all I require from them
 in that state is, the faith, and charity, and purity of christians.

C H A P.
 III.
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1. With regard to the government of the church, the office of a
 2. bishop must be considered as a very arduous employment. A bishop
 must

5. This verse, *There is one God, and one mediator between God, and man, the man Christ Jesus*, Dr. Priestly quotes as an argument against the divinity of Christ. He quotes it *without* the context: *with* it, it has a different air. *God our Saviour will have all men to be saved; and come to the knowledge of the truth: for* (ver. 5) *he is equally the God of all; and Christ is equally the Saviour of all*.

11. On laying the various texts together, in relation to a woman's teaching in public, (see a note on 1 Cor. xiv. 34) I am inclined to establish this distinction. If the woman were immediately inspired, as many were in those days, *she might preach*; if not, she was to *learn in silence with all subjection*. Whereas the man was allowed to preach, whether he were immediately inspired, or not.

15. There are many interpretations of this text. What I have given, appears to me the most natural, and easy—especially, as it is very probable from other passages of St. Paul (see the ivth and vth chapters of this epistle, and Heb. xiii. 4) that a state of celibacy was then beginning to be thought purer, than a state of marriage.

2. *The husband of one wife*. It does not appear, that if a polygamist embraced christianity, he was ordered to put away all his wives except one; but the apostle here fixes an indelible stigma

must be a man of unexceptionable character—no polygamist before his conversion—active—serious—regular—ready to receive the ignorant, and desirous to instruct them—temperate—gentle—moderate; and free from the least taint of covetousness. Let him first shew, by the regularity, and decency of his own family, how well able he is to govern the church of God. Nor would I have a new-convert appointed to this office; lest he may not yet have acquired that steadiness, and humility, which are necessary to discharge it: but let him have the most ample testimony in his favour from the Jews, or heathen he hath left; lest any aspersion on his past life should prevent the effects of his ministry.

Let the deacon also be a man of modesty, and simplicity; temperate, and moderate; uniting pure manners with sincere faith. Till he have approved himself such let him not be admitted. The polygamist I set aside; but consider it as a great recommendation to the church, if a man have carefully instructed, and governed his own family. Thus living, the deacon shews himself worthy of a higher office.—Let the deaconesses also be women of unexceptionable characters. Busy, talking, indiscrete women are very

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11. 12. 13.

stigma on the practice of polygamy, by excluding from the ministry all, who had practised it, before their conversion.—The Greek church takes this text in so odd a way, that it is held *absolutely requisite* in a bishop to be the husband of one wife; and what is still more singular, when the wife dies, the episcopal office of the husband ceases. At least that used to be the practice. See Perry's account of Russia, p. 230.

11. The word *ὑποτακας* in our translation is rendered *wives*; but as the apostle is speaking of the ministers of the church, and as we know, there was formerly an order of women called *deaconesses*, who assisted at the baptism of female converts, and were employed in attending the sick, and in other offices of charity, it is most likely, that these are the persons meant.—The old interpreters of scripture gave this sense to the passage. *Περὶ των το αξιωμα της διακονιας εχουσων λεγει.* Chrys. in locum.—I have taken a little liberty in transposing the words, as it makes the sense rather easier; but it is not at all necessary to the interpretation I have given.

13. *Great boldness.* A good conscience, and faithful discharge of a man's duty, give him a confidence in his work, which nothing else can give him.

improper

14. 15. improper to be employed.—I intend soon to see you ; but lest I should be prevented, I transmit these instructions ; that, in the
 16. mean time, the church may suffer no detriment.—Great, no doubt, is the work, in which we are engaged. The redemption of man, is a scheme, adored by angels—proved on earth by prophecies, and miracles—and a foundation laid for its everlasting continuance, after the ascension of it's blessed Author into heaven.

C H A P.
IV.

1. 2. But tho christianity thus depends on the strongest evidence, we are assured by the Spirit of prophecy, that many, misled by false principles, and corrupt practices, shall apostatize from the truth—
 3. 4. 5. that they shall engage men in unnecessary restraints ; and fill their minds with trifling, and absurd exceptions ; which are contrary to the purity of religion, and the benignity of God. Oppose
 6. 7. 8. these corruptions with steadiness. Oppose them by a holy example. Teach your converts, that outward observances are of no avail : but that a pious life produces happiness both here, and
 9. hereafter. This is true religion ; and it is in a great measure
 10. for holding this doctrine—faith in Christ, and good works, in opposition to outward observances, that I have suffered so much persecution.

11. Be you therefore a faithful follower of my steps ; and let your
 12. gravity, and piety, discountenance those, who can object only to
 13. your youth. Exhort your converts publicly, and privately ; conscientiously discharging that trust which the Holy Spirit, and the
 14. imposition of the hands of the presbytery have laid upon you.

15. 16. These two great points keep ever in view—your life, and your doctrine. Make them the only objects of your attention. They

16. *God manifest in the flesh*, is an expression, which is capable, I think, only of one sense.

10. In the text it is, *Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those, that believe* ; which words can only mean, that he is universally the Saviour of all mankind, who believe.

are the great means of your own salvation; and of the salvation of others.

C H A P.
V.
1. 2.

With becoming modesty rebuke the old—the young with the tenderness of a brother—the female penitent with cautious gravity.—Let the church seek out destitute widows; and remind the children, and near relations of widows in general, to maintain the indigent of their own families, when they are able. He who neglects this duty, neglects even what the heathen practises. The widow, who is taken into the service of the church, must long have been dead to the world: she must be remarkable for her piety; for her domestic virtues; and her works of charity. Till she be threescore years of age, I would not have her eligible. Nor would I have those chosen, who have engaged lightly in second marriages. Young widows, tho devoted to the church, may, to the great scandal of it, engage in heathen alliances, as some have done. At least, there is often a levity in them, which is not agreeable to so sacred a dedication. Let them therefore, if they chuse it, engage again in the married state; and shew a laudable example in the education of their families. By no means however let them be burthen some to the church, if their relations can maintain them. The church hath real objects enough to provide for.

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11. 12. 13.
14. 15. 16.

The pious pastor well deserves his maintenance, on the principles both of the law, and the gospel.—Hear no accusation against a presbyter,

17. 18.
19.

10. *If she have washed the saints feet*, means only in the Jewish idiom, *if she hath entertained them kindly; or done good offices to them.*

17. This expression, in the original, *Let the elders, that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour*, applies more happily to the case of the pluralist, than any other in the Testament. It admits so easy a version “Let the pious pastor have two livings.” I mean not however to enter into any argument on this question: all I mean to say, in commenting on this text, is, that I think it nothing to the purpose.—It seems very plain indeed from the context, that *τιμὴν* signifies more than an *empty honour*—an *emolument* certainly of some kind. But as the

A a a

apostles,

20. a presbyter, unless supported by two, or three witnesses. But if he
 21. be proved guilty, let him be publicly rebuked, as an example to
 others. With all earnestness, and in the name of God, and Christ,
 22. I charge you to perform the duties of your function, without pre-
 judice, and partiality. Fill the offices of the church with great
 23. caution. Few consider sufficiently the danger of partaking in other
 mens sins. Your own example will always be pure—indeed, as
 far as your health is concerned, I have thought you too abstemious.
 24. 25. The necessity of caution in filling the offices of the church, arises
 from the great deceit, and plausibility of mankind. The characters
 of few men are so conspicuous, as not to require a very nice exami-
 nation.

CHAP.
VI.

1. 2. The christian religion introduces no change in the civil rights
 of mankind. Let the servant therefore be taught obedience to his
 3. 4. 5. master, whether he be a heathen, or a christian. He who carries
 his ideas of gospel-liberty beyond this, involves his hearers in ques-
 6. tions, debate, and animosity. It is not the *station of life*, which
 is the *source of happiness* to the religious breast. True piety wants
 7. no succours from the world. The enjoyments of life accompany
 8. us only to the close of it. What then need we more than food
 9. 10. and raiment? A thirst after worldly enjoyments is wholly incom-
 patible with the virtues of a christian; and all who are misled by
 worldly things, will find mischief, and ruin in the end.

11. Let your disinterested behaviour then set an example of christian
 12. virtues to a selfish world. Go on manfully to combat the enemies
 13. 14. of that faith, under the banners of which you serve: and before

apostles, and early christians seem not to have had the least idea of expence beyond the ne-
 cessaries of life; it is not to be supposed, that the emolument here mentioned, could extend
 further. All good pastors deserved a maintenance. None wanted, or wished for more. To
 be counted *worthy of double maintenance*, I should think, therefore means only to shew, how
 very well they deserved a maintenance at all: they were doubly worthy of it.

God,

God, and Christ, I beseech you to maintain uncorrupt, the doctrines you have received; waiting with silent hope, the fulfilling of those promises, which no mortal can conceive. Instruct the rich not to depend on the good things they enjoy; but on God, the giver of them. Instruct them to grow rich in good works—in *giving*, rather than in *hoarding*. Instruct them to lay up for themselves a *treasure*, that will *last for ever*.

I conclude, as I began, with exhorting you to preserve faithfully the doctrines, that have been committed to you; and to avoid all trifling, difficult, and unnecessary questions. Curious inquirers have often carried on their researches, till they have lost themselves in infidelity.—The grace of God be with you. Amen.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

SECOND EPISTLE

O F

ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAP.

I.

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9. 10.

PAUL, by the immediate direction of God, appointed an apostle, and preacher of that gospel, which proclaims eternal life—to my beloved Timothy, grace, mercy, and peace!

The remembrance of our last affectionate parting makes me desirous of seeing you again. But however that be, it is a great happiness, that I can thank God with sincerity for that unshaken faith, which you have hitherto maintained; and which hath, in a manner, descended to you by inheritance. Again therefore I write, to excite in you, more and more, a holy zeal in the discharge of that office, which hath been conferred upon you. Fear not the opposition of men; but trust in the power of God. Consider the evidences of religion; and submit with me to bear affliction for the sake of that gospel, unto which the free grace of God

9. *Who hath called us—according to his own purpose, and grace.* No doubt the gospel was given by the *free grace of God*; that is, mankind were totally undeserving of it. But this doctrine is surely much perverted, when it is drawn to say, that as the gospel, or the salvation it brings, is the free gift of God, it is therefore given arbitrarily to one, and denied to another. The heathen, we doubt not, who lives up to the light God hath given him, receives the benefit of the atonement of Christ.

hath

hath called us—that gospel, which having been originally planned before the world began, hath now in Christ abolished death; and opened the fountains of life, and immortality.—This is the gospel, which I am appointed to preach to the Gentiles; and for which also I suffer persecution, trusting in those faithful promises, which cannot deceive. Unite with me therefore in the courageous maintenance of this faith—in the uniform practice of the duties, which it enjoins—and in the conscientious discharge of that function, in which it hath engaged you.

I find myself deserted by all the Asiatic christians; among whom are Phygellus, and Hermogenes. In the midst of this desertion, neither shame, nor any other worldly principle, hath prevented Onesiphorus from ministering to me at Rome, as he had done before at Ephesus. May God reward his pious labours, and may you imitate his fortitude! May the grace of God strengthen you in all things; and enable you to instruct those, who may instruct others!

Your station is that of a soldier of Christ. You have the difficulties of your profession before you; and if you wish to please your Superior, you must withdraw your mind from every thing but your duty. In the heathen games, an eager contest, regulated by the laws of the course, precedes the crown. The husbandman labours, before he tastes his crop. I need not point out the application of these allusions to the christian minister. Remember always your suffering Saviour. His death preceded his ascension. How

12. *To keep that which I have committed*—that is, my soul.

16. *He was not ashamed of my chain.* The apostle speaks of that chain, which he wore as a prisoner at large, according to the Roman custom. See a note on Acts xxviii. 16.

10. The word *ελεκτοι*, or *elect*, has evidently no relation to the election, or reprobation of individuals; but relates plainly to the Gentiles, as *elect*, or *called by God*, into a partnership, with the Jews in all the benefits of the gospel.

can I repine at my own sufferings, and imprifonment, when I confider them as the gracious means, in the hands of God, of drawing the Gentiles to falvation? It is the great comfort of our holy religion, that if we die unto fin, we fhall live with Chrift; and if we fuffer for him, we fhall be exalted alfo with him. On the other hand, if we renounce our profeflion, we may bring ruin on ourfelves; but we cannot alter the promifes, and threatnings of God.

Preſs theſe doctrines therefore earneſtly on your converts. Charge them to lay aſide their frivolous diſputes; and like a Jewiſh prieſt, preſiding at a ſacrifice, teach them to ſever the nobler parts from the ignoble. An attention to theſe frivolous things leads to impiety. Hence ſprang the hereſy of Hymeneus, and Philetus; who now deny the reſurrection; and have drawn a party after them, tho nothing can be plainer, nor ſtand firmer, than our hopes in this great article. We have God's promiſe; if on our part, we lead holy lives.—But we are not to wonder at this defection. As in a great houſe there are variety of utenſils, ſome of an elegant, and others of a courſer conſtruction; ſo in the church of Chriſt, there will ever be a difference among it's members: but our buſineſs is to endeavour to make ourſelves ſuch veſſels, as are *appropriated to the maſter's uſe*; in which no dregs are contained; but liquors of the pureſt kind.

I cannot therefore preſs you too earneſtly to avoid theſe novel doctrines. A ſound faith, and good life, are all that a chriſtian has to concern himſelf about. I have juſt informed you, that theſe frivolous

15. The expreſſion in the original, *rightly dividing the word of truth*, is thought to allude, as I have here rendered it, to the prieſt's office in ſacrificing.

22. The words *νεωτεριστας επιθυμιας*, ſeem to be more literally tranſlated, as we have them, *youthful luſts*; but I rather prefer the ſenſe here given, which ſome critics have approved.

CHAP.

III.

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13.

frivolous questions lead to impiety. I may add also, that they produce animosity; and how unbecoming, a contentious temper is in a minister of Christ, I need not tell you. Gentleness, and patience should be characteristic in him. By these he endeavours to draw the straying christian from vice, and error; and lead him to the acknowledgment, and practice of the truth†. Corruption, in a degree, is inseparable from the purest church—wickedness will prevail—and the form of religion, instead of the spirit of it, will possess the minds of men. They will not be satisfied with living in error themselves, unless they lead others after them; and boldly oppose the truth. While God permits it, this contest between truth, and error must subsist; and increase. Be not however discouraged. Persevere in the duties of a christian; and remember, that persecution, and religion are ever nearly allied.

The verb, *καινοτομω*, properly signifies to *innovate*. I see not therefore why the adjective may not signify *new*. And as to the word *ενδοξασα*, it is taken in so many different senses in the New Testament, that if we argue either from its *use*, or *derivation*, we may apply it to any thing, on which the *mind is bent*. St. Peter uses it entirely in this sense. 1 Peter i. 12.—If then the *terms allow* this interpretation, the *context* seems to *require* it. The whole tenor of the chapter opposes rather erroneous doctrines, than impure practices.—Besides, a caution against *youthful lusts*, one should suppose, unnecessary to a person, whom the apostle himself (1 Tim. v. 23.) blames rather for abstemiousness; tho in the midst of the refinements of philosophy, it is possible he might have been in some danger of being led aside by *new fancies* in religion, in opposition to those genuine doctrines of christianity, which are touched in the beginning of this chapter.

† I am obliged, in order to preserve the harmony of composition, to give this passage in the same modernized form, as the other parts of the epistle: but no language can reach the pleasing simplicity of the original. There is a mildness in the expression, which indicates the thing. “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach; patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.”

8. Jannes, and Jambres are instanced among those, who opposed the truth. It is remarkable, that Jannes is mentioned with Moses, in Pliny's natural history, as an eminent magician. See his index.

Your education hath been superior to that of the generality of men. Study those scriptures therefore, which from a child you have revered. They will throw the best light on the dispensation of the gospel; and, besides the instructive lessons they contain, will furnish the christian teacher with every needful assistance.

Exercise then, I earnestly charge you before God, all the functions of your ministry. Preach, rebuke, exhort: but do every thing with humility, and gentleness. You and all your successors, shall be called on for the exertion of every conciliating virtue. A general corruption shall overspread both teachers, and hearers. All this the minister of Christ must bear. He must learn to suffer: but he must also oppose falshood, and steadily maintain the truth.

For myself, I expect shortly to give my last great testimony to the truth of the gospel. My labours are almost over; and I have only to hope, with my fellow-labourers, for the gracious acceptance of my great Master.

I could wish you to be here with me, as soon as you can. Most of my assistants in the gospel I have sent on several charges. Demas, preferring the world to the gospel, hath deserted me. Luke alone is with me. I shall want the assistance of Mark: bring him with you; and remember the papers, and other things which I left

14.
15.
16. 17.

C H A P.
IV.
1. 2. 3. 4.

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7. 8.

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6. There is great elegance, and force in the original word, *Σπενδομαι*; *my blood is about to be poured out like a libation*. But I have omitted the metaphor, as it is too bold for a less animated phraseology than the original.

10. Some who date the epistle to the Colossians after this to Timothy, do not suppose, that Demas had apostatized; but had only behaved, in some respects improperly: for in Coloss. iv. 14, he is mentioned respectfully among Paul's friends. The case of Demas depends intirely on the dates of the two epistles.

13. Among different conjectures about the *cloke* mentioned here, some have supposed it a *cloke-bag*; others have supposed it the apostle's Jewish dress, which he should soon want; leaving his Roman dress, till he came into those parts again.

14. 15. 16. at Troas. I have been indeed both opposed, and deserted by many during my imprisonment. God will deal with the adversaries of our faith according to his own good pleasure. May their opposition never appear against them! A gracious God however has supported me, and will support me, under all my sufferings; which will give efficacy, I doubt not, to my preaching among the Gentiles.
17. 18.
19. 20. 21. All the brethren here desire their salutations. Erastus is still at Corinth. Trophimus I have left sick at Miletum.
- I shall depend on seeing you here before winter.
22. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you! Amen!

14. The only person mentioned here by name, who made opposition to the apostle, is one *Alexander, a copper-smith*; probably the same person who is spoken of in the first chapter of the first epistle. As Timothy, who was Bishop of Ephesus, is cautioned against him, it is probable, that Alexander was an Ephesian, sojourning among other strangers at Rome; where he took an opportunity to oppose the apostle's preaching. St. Paul says, he had *greatly withstood his words*: but there is no reason to suppose any argumentative opposition. Alexander the copper-smith was probably connected with his countryman Demetrius the silversmith; and opposed the gospel, just as that artisan had done—not by argument; but by tumult. St. Paul's expression to Timothy leads to this sense. *Οὐ καὶ σὺ φυλάσσει; observe him—have a prudent eye upon him*—as he was probably a popular, as well as an ill-disposed person. It is probable also that this is the same person, who is mentioned as a leader of the infidel Jews at Ephesus. See Acts xix. 33.

14. *The Lord reward him*, &c. as we have it in our translation. The proper sense of the word *reward* here, in the original, deserves as much to be investigated, as any word in the New Testament. *Αποδοῖν* is the reading our translators have taken; which plainly puts an unchristian curse into the apostle's mouth. But if they had lived in later days, when collating MSS. was more in use, they would no doubt have taken the future tense, *αποδώσει, the Lord will reward him*; which they might have found in some of the best, and most authentic MSS. That the apostle did not mean a *curse*, is evident from the 17th verse, in which he prays, that it may be averted.

17. *Out of the mouth of the lion*, is supposed to refer to Nero; before whom in person, it is imagined, the apostle was brought. See a note on Philip. ii. 27.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

P R E F A C E

O F T H E

E P I S T L E T O T I T U S.

TITUS was president, or bishop of the church established in Crete; the inhabitants of which island were very licentious both in their principles, and practice. In the former they were chiefly corrupted by the Jewish zealots, who were settled amongst them. Against the tenets introduced by these people, many of the precepts of this epistle are pointed; particularly those relating to servants, and governors; as the judaizing christians seem scarcely to have allowed the authority of any governor, but God.—The other part of the epistle, with regard to the ministerial office, is nearly the same, with the instruction given on that head, in the foregoing epistles, to Timothy.

E P I S T L E

T O

T I T U S.

C H A P.

I.

1. 2.

3.

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6. 7. 8. 9.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ; and preacher of that gospel, which promises eternal life; and which, tho now first opened, was designed before the world began—to Titus, my beloved convert, grace, mercy and peace!

The principal purpose, for which I left you in Crete, was to regulate, and carry on there, the great work of conversion, which I had begun; and to ordain ministers in the several towns.—I repeat the instructions, I gave you on this head. The minister of the gospel must be a person of blameless life. I object to any one, who has been a polygamist: but would have an orderly family esteemed a recommendation. He must consider himself in the light of God's steward. He must be gentle; temperate; untainted by avarice; devoted to God; charitable to man; and above all things, well established in the truth of religion, that he may be prepared, as opportunity offers, either to instruct, or reprove.

Great

Great occasion has a minister of Crete in particular to exert all his prudence, and knowledge: for the people are false, and licentious, both in principle, and practice; and characterized as such, even by their own writers. Nor are they, in a small degree, corrupted by the infusion of Jewish prejudices.

Treat them therefore with plainness. Point out to them the inefficacy of Jewish traditions. Shew them how inconsistent they are with the intention of the gospel. Inform them, that purity does not consist in abstaining from particular meats; but in an unpolluted mind: and press upon them, that all who make profession of christianity, be they Jews, or Gentiles, without observing it's moral precepts, are abominable in the sight of God.

These sound doctrines inculcate steadily, but with proper distinctions, on all ranks of people; holding up, in your own life, a pattern of virtuous behaviour. This will grace your doctrine; and tend more than any thing, to silence, and reconcile opposition.—Remember especially to instruct servants to obey their masters; informing them, that piety in their humble station is one of the greatest ornaments of the gospel of Christ.

Thus, like a good pastor, lay before your converts the great end, and intention of christianity—that it is a system of religion instructing us in the conscientious discharge of our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves: and in the belief, and hope of that happiness, which we shall receive hereafter, through the death of Christ; if we answer the end of this holy institution by purifying ourselves from the corruptions of the world. Let these doctrines then be the chief subject of your exhortations; and rebuke with that authority, which over-awes contempt.

10. 11. 12.

13. 14.

15.

16.

C H A P.
II.1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. 7. 8.

9. 10.

11. 12.

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15.

12. St. Paul quotes this verse from Epimenides. The meaning it conveys is, that the Cretans were a false people; and united in their character, the ferocity of the wild beast, and the luxury of the domesticated one. As to their falsehood; *κρητιξεν* was a proverbial expression for lying.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

8.

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10. 11.

Preach subjection to magistrates—a readiness to do good—an aversion to do injury. Point out the propriety of gentleness, and forbearance on all occasions; considering the wickedness and follies, in which we ourselves were immersed, before the goodness of God in Christ, redeemed us from sin; and made us heirs of salvation, through his grace, not our own deserts. It is in vain, tell your converts, to talk of faith, without good works. On these insist, and not on frivolous questions, which produce only debate.

Notwithstanding however the gentleness, and forbearance, which are due on all occasions, some church-discipline may be necessary; and he, who continues obstinate in his wickedness, after a second admonition, must be severed from your communion. I mean not however this severity against mere opinions: I should exercise it only towards such, as were self-convicted by the wickedness of their own actions.

9. See a note on 1 Tim. i. 4.

11. I have given what appears to be the apostle's meaning. To the idea of heresy he affixes a *bad heart*, as well as an *erroneous opinion*. *A man that is an heretic*, says he, *reject*—that is, such an heretic as *is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*.

The same restriction, which the apostle lays on church-discipline, should by parity of reason act as a restriction also on the disturbers of the peace of the church by controversy. Every man has a right to his own opinion, and to the enjoyment of it: but no man has a right to publish it in fundamentals, to the offence of others, against opinions long established; unless those opinions *come under the apostle's idea of heresy*.—It may be said, the truth can never be injured by debate; and freedom of debate is the protestant's charter.—It is true: the truth can never be injured by debate; if the debate reached those only, who are capable of debating. Others, a controversy may mislead.—And as to the protestant's charter, it were well, if the example of the early protestants had more weight. It was the scandalous sale of indulgences for sin, which first opened their mouths. Transubstantiation, and other opinions, tho in themselves absurd, as they were not openly marked with *the apostle's characteristics of heresy*, were at first treated with some respect: till by degrees, *so many things were found to be wicked*, that other things began to be *suspected*; and a *total change* ensued.

I shall

I shall soon send either Artimas, or Tychicus to you. On his
arrival meet me at Nicopolis, where I mean to continue during
the winter. But before you come, send Zenas, and Apollos; and
supply them with what is wanting. The Jewish converts, I hope,
contribute their share also in these necessary expences.

12.

13.

14.

All here salute you. The grace of Jesus Christ be with you
all! Amen.

15.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

E P I S T L E T O P H I L E M O N.

PHILEMON had been converted by St. Paul to the christian faith. Onesimus, his slave, the bearer of this epistle, had run away from him; and had probably robbed him. At Rome, where he endeavoured to lie concealed, he fell in the way of St. Paul, through some accident, which is not communicated to us. By him he was converted to the christian faith; brought to a thorough sense of his wickedness; and sent back to his master, with the following epistle.

Some fastidious critics have shewn an inclination to rid the sacred canon, if possible, of this epistle; which they seem to think of very little importance to the christian church.—There are many considerations however, which I should hope, would obtain more favour in it's behalf.

First, it shews the admirable address of St. Paul in converting sinners. By what means of application he opened a way to the heart of a rude slave; dead as it appears to all principle; is matter well worth our notice.

The pleasing, obliging manner likewise, in which the apostle applied to Philemon, the slave's master, is equally interesting. The whole epistle indeed is a model of beautiful composition.

C c c c

Lastly,

Lastly, it is a noble lesson to the christian minister, to see with what heartiness, and zeal an apostle engaged in converting one of the lowest of all human beings; and how affectionately he treated him, after he was converted. The soul of a slave was to him of equal value with the soul of a prince.—It was indeed through a happy accident, if it was accidental, that when the sacred canon was framed, this epistle to Philemon was placed immediately after those to Timothy and Titus. St. Paul having given the *best precepts* to a christian minister, it seemed highly pertinent to close his rules with *an example*.—It is very probable, that this epistle was written at the same time with the epistle to the Colossians; as may be seen from many circumstances of internal evidence, on a comparison of the two epistles.

E P I S T L E

T O

P H I L E M O N.

C H A P.

I.

1. 2. 3.

PAUL, and Timothy to Philemon, and his household, grace, mercy, and peace in God and Christ!

It is with great satisfaction, and thankfulness to God, that I hear of your faith, and charity—that, on all occasions, you have not only shewn a christian temper; but given proofs of it also by your charitable actions.

As I have been the instrument, through God, of your embracing this faith, I might speak with the authority of a spiritual father on the subject of this letter: but laying that aside, I chuse rather to address you on motives of christian charity.

The subject of my address, is your slave Onesimus; whom, having now converted, I send back to you, changed from a vile fugitive into a penitent christian. Receive him as you would do

4. 5. 6.

7.

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9.

10. 11.

12. 13.

9. *Paul the aged.* Dr. Whitby's calculation makes Paul at this time about sixty-three; supposing him at the death of Stephen to be about thirty-eight.

11. *To thee unprofitable, but now profitable.* In these words the apostle might perhaps allude to his name; *Onesimus* signifying *profit*. Names of this kind were given to slaves, in expectation of their bringing *advantage* to their masters.

C c c c 2

me.

me. Very gladly should I have detained him here; that in your room he might have been of comfort, and assistance to me in my imprisonment. But I did not chuse to do any thing in this matter, without your concurrence; knowing, how much more agreeable it is voluntarily to confer a benefit, than to have it drawn from us by necessity.

How kindly in this matter has the providence of God acted towards us. You lost a bad slave for a short time; that he might become serviceable to you for life.—And yet a slave is not now perhaps the name, by which you would call him; but rather a brother. I have esteemed him as such; and so will you. He is now your brother in a double sense; as a man, and as a christian.

Whatever regard therefore you have for me, shew it to him. If he hath wronged you of any thing, place it to my account. I will repay you. I speak *literally*: I mean not to balance a temporal account with a spiritual one. Give me therefore the happiness to believe you will grant my request.—But why need I so speak? Your kindness to me, I know, will do more, than I desire.

I would have you prepare me a lodging; as I trust, that your prayers, and mine will procure me deliverance, and bring us speedily together.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner; and all my fellow-labourers here salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen!

20. *Refresh my bowels.* The word in the original *αραναυωω* is very expressive: *Ease that commotion in my heart.*

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS epistle seems to have been intended for the use of the whole Jewish people, however dispersed; tho directed chiefly to those of Judea. It is generally supposed to have been written originally in Greek; tho its language is confessedly more elegant, than any of St. Paul's other epistles. This has occasioned some doubt of its authenticity; together with its not being inscribed with the apostle's name. But this was probably omitted *on purpose*; as it was evident, (see Acts xxii. 21) that St. Paul had made himself very obnoxious to the Jews: and as to the language, Dr. Lardner supposes, that the whole plan and sentiments of the epistle were Paul's (of which there is strong internal evidence) but that he might have employed some amanuensis, (as he did on other occasions) who expressed his thoughts in purer Greek, than he commonly used himself.

In this epistle the apostle dwells on the dignity of Christ's character; 564—and on the superiority of the gospel to the law: 565—He shews, that, according to prophecy, the gospel could not have been administered by angels: 566—He shews also that the Messiah must have partaken of human-nature: 567—His superiority to Moses is

next shewn: 568—From thence the apostle exhorts the Jews to believe in this great dispensation: 568—The rest of God is next applied to *that rest*, which the gospel promises: 569—Christ is delineated as a high-priest: 570—superior to the Jewish high-priest: 570—The weakness of the Jewish christians is pointed out in not apprehending these doctrines: 571—Melchisedeck is held out as a type of Christ: 572—and from hence the dignity of Christ's priesthood is inferred: 573—The apostle recapitulates what he had said: 574—He then considers the whole Jewish œconomy as a system of types: 575—realized in Christ: 576—purification, in the legal sacrifice, he says, was only obtained by blood: 577—which was a type of the blood of Christ: 577—From hence the apostle exhorts to a full dependence on this sacrifice: 579—He next exemplifies faith in many instances: 580—Then exhorting to faith, and piety; he concludes with practical instructions: 584.

E P I S T L E

T O T H E

H E B R E W S.

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| <p>GOD having through various dispensations gradually opened his will to mankind; hath at length revealed it fully by his Son; who being endowed with infinite power, first created the world—then redeemed it—and afterwards resumed his ancient glory: being of a nature infinitely superior to all those heavenly ministers, by whom the law was dispensed. This is very evident from observing his character as marked by the prophets. Is it a language ever used to angels, <i>Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?</i> Was it literally, or typically, spoken of Solomon, <i>I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son?</i> And was it not expressive of</p> | <p>C H A P.
 I.
 1. 2. 3.
 4.
 5.
 6.</p> |
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3. The Son is here represented *as the express image of God*; an idea, which some writers have explained, by the impression, which the wax receives from the engraving of the seal. Philo calls the Logos, *Χαρακτήρ ἢ εἰκὼν Θεοῦ*.

5. As the Messiah was predicted to spring from the house and lineage of David; and as Solomon so far answered this character, and was besides the most illustrious of the Jewish kings, and founded also the temple of Jerusalem; he was considered as a type of Christ.

5. Pf. ii. 7.

5. 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chron. xxii. 10.

6. Pf. xcvi. 7.

the

the dignity of this great character, in his exalted state, when the prophet calls upon *all the angels of God to worship him*? The character of angels is that of *ministering spirits*. Far differently the prophet speaks of the Son. He is represented as having power, and dominion over all created beings—as establishing his throne in justice, and equity—as the Creator of all things—and as existing from eternity. So again, when the prophet speaks of his exalted station, as subduing the grand enemies of mankind, sin, and death; the expressions surely are not applicable to angels, who were not the givers of the law, and the gospel; but merely the instruments employed in those services.

CHAP.
II.

1. 2.

3.

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6.

All these prophetic characters of the Messiah should awaken our attention to the truths of the gospel. The inference is plain. If the transgression of the Mosaic law, revealed only through the mediation of angels, subjected the Israelites to so great a penalty, as we find it did; what have we to answer for, if we neglect a law, given by the Son of God; and confirmed to us, not only by the strongest human testimony; but by the authority of miracles, and the visible power of the Holy Ghost?

That no angelic ministration dispensed this last great revelation of God's will; is plain from the words of David: *What is man that thou art mindful of him; or the Son of man, that thou visitest him?*

7. *Made his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire*—made them like the wind, and like lightning.

7. Pf. civ. 4.

12. 13. Pf. xlv. 6, 7. cii. 25, 26, 27.

12. 13. Pf. cx. 1.

5. *By the world to come*, is commonly understood the *restored world*, or the gospel state. Many Jewish writers, and early christians were of opinion from these passages in St. Paul, and some others in Daniel, (particularly chap. x. 13, 21) that the world was divided into different districts, and put under the government of angels: and that in particular the Jewish nation was committed to Michael. St. Paul might have a view to this opinion, when he says the christian world was subject only to Christ.

Thou

Thou madest him for some time lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory, and honour; and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. Now these words, tho primarily spoken of Adam, and his descendants, can by no means have their sole reference to man, or his dominion over the works of creation; which we evidently see they have not. But they refer directly to the divine Minister of the new covenant; and mark his character in strong terms. They point out Jesus who was *made lower than the angels* during his state of humiliation; but after the price of redemption was paid, *crowned with glory and honour.*

Now it pleased God, however contrary to Jewish prejudices, that the great Author of our salvation should take upon him the nature of those, whom he redeemed; and pass through a state of suffering. Thus he is represented by the prophets, calling mankind *his brethren*—and in other places, calling them *his children*. All these passages in the prophets point out the human nature of the Messiah. He partook of the same flesh and blood with those, whom he redeemed that by subjecting himself to death, he might vanquish the power of the devil; and deliver all mankind from the bondage of sin. Instead of appearing in an angelic form, he appeared as one of the descendants of Abraham; and thought it proper to be, in all respects; like his brethren; that he might be a merciful high-priest before God, atoning for the sins of the people. What an encouragement.

7. *A little*, might better be rendered, *a little while*; as it is in the margin of our Testament.

9. Our Saviour, quoting this psalm, applies it, as St. Paul does. Matt. xxi. 16.

12. Pf. xxii. 22.

13. If. viii. 17, 18.

14. The devil is here said to have *the power of death*, as his tempting our first parents was the original cause of death.

is it to us, who follow his steps, that we are succoured in all our temptations, by one, who in every respect hath been tempted like ourselves ?

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

But while you reflect on the humanity, and humiliation of Christ ; consider, on the other hand, my brethren, his dignity. One of the greatest characters, which you acknowledge, is that of Moses. Faithful, no doubt, he was in that appointment, which God intrusted to him. But between Christ and Moses, the same difference is established by God, as we see between the master, and the servant, of a family. Moses precedes as a preparatory law-giver, opening the way for something that was to follow. Christ comes after, fulfilling the types of the law ; and completing that institution which Moses had only shadowed out.

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16. 17. 18.

Of this holy institution, my brethren, we are a part, if we persevere faithfully in our profession. Remember that passage in the psalms, in which the Israelites are exhorted to hear God's voice ; and not to *harden their hearts, as their fathers did in the wilderness* ; when they persisted forty years in an obstinate course of disbelief, and disobedience ; and provoked God at length to forbid their entering the promised land. Let this example of your forefathers be an instruction to you. They disbelieved God. Take care that you do not disbelieve the revelation of his will through Christ : but daily encourage, and exhort each other, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. All depends on your holding steadily your profession to the end ; and taking every opportunity of increasing in christian virtue. Some there were among your forefathers, who did not revolt from their obedience : but the greatest

3. As the apostle had before preferred Christ to angels, so now he prefers him to Moses. Christ was at the head of his economy. Moses was only a steward.

4. See Numb. xii. 7. in which Moses is expressly called a *servant*.

7. Psalm xcvi.

number were not permitted to enter the promised land; but fell in the wilderness.—Once more therefore let me repeat my exhortations, that this example of unbelief may have it's full weight: and that none of us may forfeit the promise of that rest, which is offered to *us*, as well as *them*; and which they forfeited through unbelief.

19.

C H A P.
IV.

1. 2.

The christian's rest depends on the same promise, as that of the Israelites. Observe those passages of scripture, which mention *the rest of God*. After the creation was finished, God is said to *rest from his work*. He is said also to *rest the seventh day*—and David makes an application to certain persons, who were to *enter into that rest*. Since therefore some must enter into that rest; and the ancient Israelites, to whom it was at first applied, did not enter into it; it is plain, that David had reference to some *future rest*—that is, he had reference to some rest, besides that of the land of Canaan: for that *rest* had been already compleated by Joshua.—We conclude therefore that God's holy servants are to expect some *future rest*; and that this rest is to be of a holy, and a spiritual kind, when they shall rest from their earthly labours; as God is said to rest, from his work.

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10.

Let it be our great endeavour then to enter into this holy rest; and make that use of the infidelity of our forefathers, which we ought; considering especially, that in the dispensation of the gospel there is a still nicer discrimination to be made between good and bad—and that the very thoughts, and intentions of the heart, if impure, become guilt in that discerning eye, before which every part of the

11.

12.

13.

5. Pl. xcv. 12.

8. By *Jesus* in this verse, is meant Joshua, whose name, and office in leading the people to a place of rest, made him a remarkable type of Christ. In the margin he is called Joshua; and it is only misleading ignorant readers, to call him Jesus in the text.

13. *Naked and open*. Some suppose an allusion is made here to sacrificing. As it then appears, whether the victim is pure, or faulty; so, &c.

14. creation is open. Having therefore so great an high-priest, Jesus
 15. the Son of God, who is now making intercession for us in heaven,
 let us hold fast our faith in so merciful a deliverer. For, as I just
 observed, we have not now an high-priest, who cannot feel our
 infirmities; but one, who was in every respect tempted as we are.
 16. Let us then come boldly to the throne of grace, assuring ourselves,
 that we shall find from the true mercy-seat of God, sufficient help
 in all our distresses.

C H A P.

V.

1. 2.

- And now considering Christ in the light of an high-priest, let
 us see how much his character, under this idea, is exalted above
 the Jewish high-priest.—In the first place, the Jewish high-
 priest was a frail, and erring man: and tho he might have com-
 passion on those, for whom he officiated; yet his compassion was
 founded on a different motive from that of Christ. He pitied the
 frailties of others from feeling his own: and therefore in offering
 sacrifices for them, he always included himself.—In the second
 place, tho no man could take upon himself the Levitical priesthood,
 unless called by God, as Aaron was; yet Christ was not only
 appointed by God; but had an everlasting priesthood conferred upon
 him, of which Melchisedec's was a type.—Again, the prayers,
 and supplications, and sufferings of Christ were infinitely more effica-
 cious, than the atonement of the Jewish high-priest. Having been
 raised from the dead, and having given us an example of obedience,
 and resignation to the will of God; he was consecrated, as it were,
 through sufferings; and making an atonement for the sins of the

14. St. Paul here resumes the subject of the high-priest, which he had dropped at the begin-
 ning of the iiii chapter. The comparison of Christ with Moses; and of christian immortality
 with the Jewish Canaan, had interrupted his argument.—*With whom we have to do: προς ου
 ημιν ο λογος: of whom we speak.*

15. See chap. ii. 18.

16. See Pf. cx. 4.

world; he became an eternal high-priest, of whom, as I observed, Melchisedec was a type. 10.

Of this resemblance between Christ, and Melchisedec I could say many things to you, which would shew more fully the superiority of our Lord to the Levitical high-priest; but I fear you are not yet disposed to receive them. From the time of your conversion one should suppose, you might have become teachers of religion: instead of which, I fear, you have not yet digested the first principles of it. Strong meats are the food of those who are arrived at full age; and milk and lighter food, of children. I fear you are to be numbered among the latter. 11. 12. 13. 14.

C H A P.
VI.
1. 2. 3.

However leaving for the present the principles of religion, repentance, faith, baptism, the communication of spiritual gifts, the resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment, let us proceed, through God's permission, to these deeper points. As for those who have apostatized from the truth, after having been enlightened by the gospel—convinced by it's evidence—and partakers of it's blessings; one should suppose it utterly impossible they should ever again be restored. Like ground, which answers no longer to the pains of the husbandman, but in return for it's culture, produces only weeds, they must be left to the effect of their ingratitude, and infidelity.—Notwithstanding however what I say, I am persuaded better things of the generality of you. And you may be assured, in particular, that God will not forget that charity, by which you have so often evidenced your religion; and in which I hope you will constantly persevere; after the example of all those holy patriarchs, your forefathers, who through faith, and patience, at length inherited the promises. How strict a performer of his promise God is to his faithful servants, may be concluded from his oath to Abraham; that he would bless, and multiply him; which promise was first performed in a temporal way; but is now fully compleated in the gospel. Thus God condescending 14. 15. 16.

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to

17. to the manner of men, who consider an oath as the most decisive
 18. proof, confirmed his promise in that way to his obedient servants.
 19. And thus we christians, who inherit the same promise, have the
 same foundation for the performance of it—God's word, confirmed
 20. by his oath. On this we should depend in all our distresses, raising
 our thoughts to the completion of it by that blessed Redeemer, who
 hath entered for us into the Holy of Holies—our great high-priest,
 and intercessor; of whom (to resume my argument) Melchisedec
 C H A P. VII. was a type.

1. This holy man, who was king of Salem, and priest of the most
 high God, met Abraham returning from the defeat of the five
 2. kings; and blessing him, received at his hands the tenth of all
 he had taken.—Now here the first thing that strikes us, in the
 comparison between this prince, and Christ, is the name; Mel-
 3. chisedec signifying *king of righteousness*; and Salem *the city of peace*.
 —We are next struck with the mode of his descent. The Le-
 vitical high-priest preserves his genealogy pure from Aaron. But
 of the lineage of Melchisedec nothing is said. Neither his birth,
 nor his death is noticed. Hence therefore he becomes a type of
 that great high-priest, who had neither beginning of days, nor

20. From ver. 10, chap. v.

1. See Gen. xiv. 18.

3. *Without father, without mother, &c.* This is a very common way in speaking of those, whose ancestors are unknown. Thus Livy says, *Patre nullo, matre serva*. l. IV. And Seneca (epist. 108) speaking of the two Roman kings, Servius Tullius, and Ancus Marcius, says, *Alter patrem non habet; alter matrem*. *Ἀπατρως, καὶ ἀμητρως*, were common expressions among the Greeks also, to distinguish people of unknown families. Among the Jews it was always conceived, that altho the Messiah was to be of the house and lineage of David, there was still some mysterious obscurity with regard to his birth. Thus his enemies remarked, that Jesus could not be the Messiah, because they *knew him to be the carpenter's son*: Mark vi. 3. And again, *When Christ shall come, no one shall know whence he is*. John vii. 27.—The application of such a phrase to Christ, as that *he had neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, can mean nothing, I think, if it do not mean a unity with the Father.

end

end of life.—Then again consider the greatness of that character, to whom even the patriarch Abraham paid tithes. The Levitical priest, who by the law received tithes of the people, may be said to have paid tithes himself to Melchisedec, in the person of his progenitor Abraham.—Consider also the superiority, which that great high-priest assumed in blessing our father Abraham: for undoubtedly it is the greater, who blesses the less; and not the less, who blesses the greater.

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10. 11. 12.
13. 14.

From what hath been said then it appears first, that the Levitical priesthood can, by no means, be considered as a perfect institution; for then the order of Aaron needed not to have been superseded by the order of Melchisedec.—Secondly it appears, that as there is a change in the priesthood, there is a change also in the law. For as the people received the law under the priesthood; a new priesthood implies a new law. The tribe of Judah, from which our Lord sprang, had evidently no connection with the altar.—Thirdly, it is evident, that from the excellency of the new priesthood, the law must also take a new excellence; and must be changed, agreeably to the nature of the priest, from a ceremonial ritual, into a spiritual service. Otherwise what advantage arises from a priest, who is to *live for ever*? The law of Moses is disannulled, because being weak, and imperfect, it was unable to draw it's observers to perfection. The covenant of the gospel leads directly to God.—Again, let us consider the confirmation of this covenant. *The Lord swears*, saith the prophet, *and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*. By no such designation was the Levitical

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5. 6. In the text the *blessing*, and *receiving of tithes* are united. I thought it might be easier, and might place the resemblance in a stronger light, to separate them.

19. The neuter *ediv* is often taken for *persons* as well as *things*.

21. See Psalm cx. 4.

22. priest consecrated. Therefore the new covenant, of which Christ
 23. is the high-priest, is the more excellent, because the more strongly
 24. confirmed.—From the same prophecy we are assured, that it is
 25. unchangeable also. In the Levitical priesthood death was con-
 26. tinually introducing change: but Christ, says the prophet, is esta-
 27. blished a *priest for ever*.—Lastly, from laying all these con-
 28. siderations together, we may rest assured, that we have an eternal,
 unchangeable high-priest, who is continually making intercession
 for us; and that we shall find in him a Redeemer, who is able
 to save all, who come to God in his name. Holy, and spotless
 himself; of dignity sufficient to make an atonement; he offers,—
 not like the Levitical priest, an offering first for his own sins, and
 then for the sins of the people—but he offers himself, once for
 all, a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; thus completely fulfilling
 that great prophecy of the psalmist (given long after the law) that
 a new priesthood should be consecrated, not subject to the in-
 firmities, and changes of the Levitical one; but absolutely pure,
 holy, and eternal.

C H A P.
 VIII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

5. The sum of what I have said, is this, that we christians have a
 high-priest as far superior, in every instance, to the Jewish one;
 as a constant intercessor at the throne of God, is to a priest officiating
 in an earthly temple. Such intercession may be considered as making
 him a *continual high-priest*; tho the great sacrifice is offered; and
 he is now removed into heaven. Temple-sacrifices the Jewish
 priest was sufficient to offer. But here is a service, which no
 earthly priest could perform. In fine, then, the Jewish high-priest
 was only a mere type of the heavenly one; as the Jewish tabernacle
 was of the throne of God. This was clearly expressed at the giving

28. Pf. cx. 4.

5. See Exod. xxv. 40, and xxvi. 30.

of the law; when Moses was ordered to make every thing *after the pattern*, which, in a heavenly vision, was shewn to him *on the mount*. And indeed there is as much difference between the two ministrations; as between the temporal promise of a land of Canaan, and the heavenly one of an eternal habitation. 6.

Now this great change of one covenant for the other, is founded on the deficiency of the law, and the excellence of the gospel. If the first had been perfect, there had been no room for a second. Thus the prophet Jeremiah speaks: *Behold the days come, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not*, saith the Lord. The prophet having thus far shewn God's intention to supersede the Jewish institution, proceeds farther to shew the nature of the christian religion. He touches on the gracious intention of it, as a covenant of mercy to mankind; he declares God's promise of bringing the doctrines of it home to the consciences of men by his Holy Spirit; and concludes his view of it, by mentioning the grand point of difference between it, and the Jewish religion—*it's making a full atonement for the sins of mankind*. He calls it, you observe, *a new covenant*; which plainly implies the abolition of the *old*. 7.
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This great intended change appears also from the whole economy of the Jewish tabernacle, which prefigured something, that was to succeed. It appeared itself to be a mere temporary matter. The *outer part* of it, called the sanctuary, contained the golden candlestick, and the table of shew-bread: the *inner part*, or the Holy of 2.
3.

C H A P.
IX.

8. Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.

4. Holies, was separated from the other, and contained the golden
 5. censer, wherewith the high-priest made the yearly atonement—the
 6. ark—the golden pot with manna—Aaron's rod—the tables of the
 7. covenant—and the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat;
 8. the figurative intention of all which I shall not here particularly
 9. 10. examine. In the first of these apartments the priests performed
 11. 12. their daily service: but the second was a sacred recess, shut out
 13. from all inspection; into which the high-priest alone entered; and
 14. that but once a year, to make atonement, with sacrifice, for his
 15. own sins, and the sins of the people. All this ceremony was
 16. plainly intended to shew, that something was yet wanting to open
 17. the Holy of Holies to all mankind: and that the various services
 performed, consisting merely of observances, of no value in them-
 selves, were figures only of that perfect sacrifice, which should
 afterwards take place.
11. 12. All these types, and ceremonies Christ hath realized; offering
 his own blood, instead of the Levitical sacrifice of goats, and calves;
 entering the true Holy of Holies; and making for us, not an *annual*,
 13. but a *perpetual* atonement. And well may we suppose, if the
 14. sprinkling of the blood of animals purified the Jew from all his
 15. legal defilements; that the blood of Christ offered, through the
 divine appointment, without spot to God, will purge us from sin.
 Thus Christ becomes the mediator of a new, and better covenant;
 redeeming by his death, and restoring to an eternal inheritance,
 even those who lived under the first covenant.
16. Now the death of a testator is absolutely necessary to give force
 17. to a testament. While the testator lives, the testament, or covenant,

4. It appears from the text, that the ark contained these several things: whereas we are assured (1 Kings viii. 9) that it contained only the two tables of stone. *Ex* η therefore must refer to the tabernacle.

16. The word Διαθήκη signifies here both a *testament*, and a *covenant*. St. Paul perhaps considered a *divine covenant*, as a *testament*, because of it's being *unalterable*.

is not binding. Accordingly the first testament, to make it a proper type of the second, was consecrated with blood. Thus Moses after he had read the law, took blood; and sprinkled the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined. And thus the tabernacle, as soon as it was erected, together with all it's utensils, were sprinkled with blood; without which indeed we have not in the law any idea of remission. God thought it necessary therefore by such a consecration to represent that sacred blood, which was afterwards to be shed for the sins of mankind. And as the Holy of Holies is the representation of heaven; so Christ, the great mediator, enters it; not like the Jewish high-priest, annually with the blood of animals; but once for all, on this last great revelation of God's will; offering his own blood, as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. As man also is appointed to undergo the two great states of death, and judgment; so Christ, having first died for sin, will appear, on his second coming, without any idea of atonement, merely as our judge.

The whole legal ritual then is a mere typical representation: nor were it's sacrifices ever intended to make a full atonement. We prove

CHAP.
X.
1. 2.

19. St. Paul says, that Moses sprinkled the book, as well as the people, with blood. But the passage of Moses (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8) to which St. Paul alludes, does not mention the book as being sprinkled; either in the LXX, from which St. Paul commonly quotes; or in our translation, which is taken from the original. The vulgate is ambiguous: *Accipiens sanguinem vitulorum, ipsum quoque librum, et populum omnem asperxit.*

21. In Exod. xl. where the consecration of the tabernacle is related, blood is not specified. But, no doubt, St. Paul, who was so well versed in the Jewish ceremonial, understood, that a purification through blood was meant by the words *hallowing*, and *sanctifying*: and accordingly Josephus expressly says, that Moses consecrated the tabernacle, and all it's utensils with oil, and blood: *ῥαπαύειν τὴν σκηνὴν, καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὴνσκευὴ, ἐλαίῳ, καὶ τῷ αἵματι.* Antiq. III. 9.

22. In cases of inability a portion of fine flour is substituted as a sin-offering, for the life of an animal. Levit. v. 11.

2. *For then they would not have ceased.* The vulgate, the Syriac, many good MSS, and even the margin of our own translation, have it, *For then would they have ceased.* The negative,

prove this from the very nature of them. If they made a *full atonement*; what end was answered by their repetition? The worshipper, once purged, would have been freed from sin. But that was not the case. In every annual expiation, all past sins were again remembered. In the nature of things indeed it is not possible, that the blood of bulls, and of goats, can take away sin. And in this light we consider that prophetic passage in the psalms; in which Christ, when coming into the world, is thus represented addressing the Father: *Sacrifices, and offerings for sin Thou hast rejected: but thou hast provided a body for an offering. I embrace, O God, thy gracious designs: and agreeably to the prediction of all thy holy prophets, shall fulfill it.* Thus Christ by substituting his own body in the room of the offerings, and sacrifices of the law, plainly establishes the one on the abolition of the other.—By this holy sacrifice then we are justified; giving up every idea of justification by the law—not trusting in an earthly high-priest, and the

in our translation, intirely destroys the sense; unless indeed the sentence be read interrogatively.

5. The passage from Psalm xl. from whence this verse is quoted, is singular. The words, *but a body hast thou prepared*, are in the original Hebrew, *mine ears hast thou bored*; alluding to the Jewish custom of boring the ears of slaves. Our translation of the Psalms renders it totally without any meaning at all; *mine ears hast thou opened*.—The interpretation is, that Christ is represented as submitting to the will of his Father, with all the obedience of a willing slave.

But still how comes it, that St. Paul, instead of saying, *mine ears hast thou bored*, says, *a body hast thou prepared me*?—This is singular; but the truth is, the apostle, instead of quoting from the original Hebrew, quotes from the septuagint; which renders the original Hebrew very happily, as the apostle has quoted it. Slaves were always considered both by the Jews, and Greeks, as *mere bodies*. Thus Raguel gave Tobias half his slaves, cattle, and money—*σώματα, και κτήνη, και αργυρον*: and thus the slaves of the men of Sichem, are called *τα σώματα*. Many instances also occur in heathen writers. The LXX therefore, by a very happy interpretation, translate the act of *boring the ear*, by the word *σώμα*, which includes the true sense; and *here* signifies both the *body offered*, and the *form* (the *μορφὴν δαλν*, Phil. ii. 7.) in which our blessed Lord appeared.

atonement

atonement of temple sacrifices—but in a high-priest, who having
 offered himself a sacrifice for sin once for all, sat down for ever on
 the right hand of God; triumphing over death, and making a full
 atonement for all his faithful servants. For this is the sense of the
 prophecy of Jeremiah, which I quoted above. Having spoken of
 the *new covenant*, which God was about to make; and the new
 laws he was about to establish; the prophet adds, that in this
 new covenant, a complete atonement should be made for the sins
 of mankind. In fine then, if you allow the force of this prophecy
 thus far; you must conclude farther, that the offerings, and sacri-
 fices of the temple-service are now rendered entirely useless.

Since therefore, my brethren, we have thus a new, and living
 way opened to us into the Holy of Holies, by the blood of Christ;
 and since we have an eternal high-priest presiding there, making
 constant intercession for us, let us draw near with full faith, and
 assurance in his mercy. Let us reject all dependence on legal puri-
 fication; and lay the stress on the purification of the heart. Let
 us steadily persevere in the profession of our faith; raising our
 minds with the promises we have received. Let no prejudices
 against our brethren subsist among us; but let us shew our cha-
 rity by an unreserved communication of kindness. Of one thing
 let me particularly remind you: continue regularly your christian
 assemblies; and return not to the temple-worship. Even in a
 worldly light it is prudent; for a dreadful calamity, you may assure
 yourselves, hangs over this unhappy country.—But the great point
 to be considered is, that if you apostatize, you reject the only means
 of drawing you to the truth, which God hath thought proper to
 promulge. You give up the sacrifice of Christ; and place your-
 selves among those, who having now no farther means of con-
 version, must await the just indignation of God. Will that God,

15. 16. See Heb. viii. 10, 12.

29. think you, who punished every transgression of the Mosaic law with so much rigour; see without offence the stronger evidence of the gospel treated with contempt even by those, who have been once sanctified—the Son of God despised—his great atone-
30. ment rejected—and all the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit fet at nought? Remember that awful sentence, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay*, saith the Lord. And again: *The Lord shall judge his people*. Consider what it is to fall into the hands of a Being,
31. whose attribute is *eternal justice*. Recollect the conflicts you en-
32. dured after your first conversion—the reproaches, and persecutions
33. 34. you underwent—and your steady adherence to me, and others of the apostles of Christ; suffering the loss of your worldly possessions through faith in an eternal inheritance.
35. Cast not away therefore that faith, which is the earnest of this
36. eternal inheritance. Shew yourselves God's faithful servants; trust
37. 38. him for your reward; and be not discouraged, if you are not immediately delivered. In God's good time you shall receive assistance. Remember the words of the Prophet: *He that cometh, will come; and will not tarry*: that is, they who obey him, may depend on his assistance. And immediately after, *the just shall live by faith*. But he who renounces his faith, must remember also, that he renounces the blessings annexed to it. I should be sorry to suppose, that any of you, my brethren, are of that number. Let me rather suppose you among those, who consider your faith as the only ground of your salvation. Faith is still what it always has been,
39. through

C H A P.

XI.

1. 2.

30. Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.

38. Hab. ii. 3, 4.

1. There is little doubt, I think, but the *faith* here meant, is that *faith in the promises of a Messiah*, which strongly possessed all the serious part of mankind, in the early ages of the world. Through this faith we suppose Abel offered his sacrifice to God. Noah, who was a type of Christ, could not be ignorant, one should suppose, of what he himself represented. Abraham,

through the whole history of your forefathers. It may be called the realizing of our hopes, as nothing can be the object of our hopes, which has not first been the object of our faith. It may be called also the evidence of such things, as our knowledge cannot reach. Through faith we are assured, that the works of creation were formed by the word of God. It was faith in the promises of God, that gave a value to the sacrifice of Abel; and

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to whom the promise of a Redeemer was renewed, no doubt, had a clear idea, in all his typical transactions, of the nature of that promise. The patriarchs too acted under the same impression; and Moses shewed, in all his actions, that the *reproach of Christ was greater riches to him, than the treasures of Egypt*. Under the influence of this promise also all the worthies of Israel acted—their judges administered justice—their heroes fought—their martyrs died—and their prophets predicted future events.

On the supposition also of this general faith in the promises of God, (which, no doubt, were more or less clear to different persons,) we account for several crimes in the bible-history, which cannot well be accounted for on any other supposition: at least, we cannot account for Moses's mentioning several of them, unless with a view to shew how strongly the promise of a Saviour wrought in the early ages of the world. We follow the clue, which St. Paul has given us; who mentions some of the judges of Israel, as acting under the influence of this faith, tho they were certainly guilty of very unwarrantable actions.

On the birth of Cain, Eve declared, *she had gotten a man from the Lord*; supposing most probably that Cain was the promised Saviour. Cain, adopting, as is also probable, his mother's opinion; and finding that Abel was more favoured by God than he was, might ground his jealousy against his brother, on this circumstance.

To a jealousy of the same kind we may refer the enmity between Jacob, and Esau; and the machinations of Joseph's brethren; who might think him, as the child of Rachel, and their father's favourite, the promised seed.

To this desire also of giving birth to the promised seed, we may refer several of the accounts of polygamy, and concubinage, which we meet with in the bible history. Abraham's intercourse with Hagar was plainly of this kind. Even the story of Lot's daughters may be referred to this source. As far as appears (see Gen. xix. 8) they were virtuous women: but being now shut out from all mankind; and being utterly deprived of the great hope, which possessed all the women of those days, who believed in the promises of God, they were led into this abominable action. It appears evidently from the face of the story, that they had no will, but that of having offspring: and that they rather gloried in what they had done, seems plain from the names they gave their children, which signify the mode of their birth.

made

made it an example to future times. Cain's, being not of the ex-
 5. piatory kind, was not founded in faith. It was the same faith,
 6. that carried Enoch to heaven without his suffering the pains of mor-
 tality. He pleased God: and we know there is no other way of
 7. pleasing him; but by a steady, and active faith in his providence,
 8. 9. and promises. It was faith, that saved Noah, and his family in
 the ark; and infidelity that destroyed the rest of mankind. It was
 10. faith, which carried Abraham into an unknown country, where
 11. he dwelt with his posterity; resting on the general promise of God
 12. for a better inheritance. Through faith also Sarah, in her old
 age, bore a son; from which child of faith sprang the whole
 people of Israel.—All the eminent patriarchs died before the
 completion of the promises, they had received: but having full
 faith in them, they considered themselves, in this world, only as
 14. 15. on a journey; passing to their heavenly home. For if they had
 regarded only temporal things, their prospects lay fairer in the
 16. country they had left. But it is plain they had better hopes.
 Therefore God professed himself to be their protector; and pre-
 17. pared for them a mansion of future happiness. By faith Abraham
 18. offered Isaac; tho in him he expected a completion of all the
 19. promises, which God had made him. But as, at first, he had
 miraculously received a son; he concluded, that God could as
 20. easily restore him. Through faith in the promises of God, Isaac
 21. blessed Jacob, and Esau. And afterwards Jacob, when he was
 22. dying in Egypt, blessed the two sons of Joseph. Joseph also, on

14. Πατρίδα ἐπιζητεῖσι, says the original; which we translate coldly, *They seek a country*. But πατρίς signifies, not *a country*; but our *native country*—the place where our ancestors have lived.

21. *Leaning on the top of his staff*. Thus it is rendered in the septuagint; from which the sacred writers commonly quote: but in the Hebrew, it is *bowled*, or *leaned on his bed*; which considering the patriarch was then dying, seems to be the better sense.

his death-bed, predicted the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt; and in testimony of his faith, ordered his own bones to be carried into the land of Canaan.—The extraordinary prefer- 23.
 vation of Moses was owing to an act of faith in his parents: the
 promises of God weighed more with them, than the threatnings 24.
 of the king. Through the same principle also Moses himself, when
 he came to years of discretion, renounced all connections with the 25.
 court of Pharaoh; and chose rather to partake of the afflictions 26.
 of his own people, than to enjoy the pleasures of a sinful life. He
 had full trust in the promises of God; and preferred the hard
 duties, to which they led him, before all the softness, and luxury
 of Egypt. His faith carried him forward to an expected Messiah; 27.
 and in this confidence he conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, and
 despised the wrath of Pharaoh. Through faith he kept the first 28.
 passover; and through the sprinkling of blood, averted the des-
 troying angel from his people: and lastly, through faith he passed 29.
 the red sea; while the Egyptians pursuing him, were destroyed.—
 In the sequel of the Israelitish history, Joshua was enabled to throw 30.
 down the walls of Jericho through faith—by which also Rahab 31.
 was saved in the midst of a general massacre.—But it would be 32. 33. 34.
 endless to enumerate all the champions, and all the prophets, and 35. 36. 37.
 martyrs of the bible-history; and enter into all their actions, and 38.
 sufferings, through this great virtue.—Thus faith has been the 39.
 leading principle from the earliest times to these: and tho *we* have 40.
 seen the completion of those promises, which *they* only saw at a

26. *Esleeming the reproach of Christ*; that is, the reproaches, to which a belief in the Messiah led him.

37. *Ἐπειράθησαν, were tempted*. The meaning is commonly supposed to be, *they were tempted to renounce their faith by threatnings*. Some reject the expression entirely as it is not found in several MSS; while others again suppose the right reading was *ἐπετάθησαν*, they were burnt alive.

distance ;

distance; yet God hath left sufficient room for the exercise of our faith also in the duties of our more perfect covenant; that we might partake with them in the same blessed reward of faith and holiness.

C H A P.
XII.

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Under the influence then of such numerous examples in the exercise of this great virtue, let us lay aside every incumbrance, and run with patience our christian course; setting chiefly before us, as the point to aim at, the example of our blessed Lord, who through a life of sorrow, and distress, entered eternal glory. And when you feel yourselves fainting in this great conflict, renew your endeavours by considering what accumulated misery your great Leader underwent for your sakes.—Besides, your sufferings have yet been light, compared with those of such holy men, as have offered up their lives for religion. Your sufferings have yet only been chastisements for sin. Have you forgotten the exhortations of scripture, which speak to all suffering sinners: *My son, take patiently the chastening of the Lord; and let it urge you to serve him with greater diligence: for the correction of the Lord is an instance of his love.* By chastising you, therefore, God shews himself your father. It is a fatherly duty. To be without chastisement, would argue you not to be under the discipline of a father. And if we respect an earthly father for his attention to his children; much more ought we to reverence our heavenly father; who does not, as the earthly father, correct us on worldly motives; but for the benefit of our immortal souls. For the present, no doubt, every degree of correction is painful: but happy is he, who can consider it as an exercise of his virtue. Lift up therefore your feeble hands, and bend your stiffened knees; and amend your faults under the correcting hand of your heavenly

Chap. XII. The beginning of this chapter should be read, and studied by all, who are in affliction.

5. Prov. iii. 11, 12.

father.

father. Live peaceably with men; and piously with God; and
 you shall be inheritors of God's holy kingdom. But take care,
 that you renounce not, in any degree, the faith you have received.
 Take care not to mix the doctrines of the world with the truths of
 religion. Remember the case of Esau, who for a morsel of food
 sold his birth-right. He found it impossible to recover that privilege,
 after he had once lost it: and it is justly to be apprehended, that all
 apostates may bring themselves into the same dreadful circumstances.—
 Much more guilty would the christian apostate be, than the Jewish. 18. 19. 20.
 The law of Moses was given with all those circumstances of terrific 21.
 grandeur, which struck it's observers with fear. Even Moses himself
 was terrified with the awful appearance of that wonderful transaction.
 Whereas you, instead of standing trembling at the bottom of a 22. 23.
 mountain, flaming with fire from heaven, are admitted, on the
 easy conditions of the gospel, to the blessed society of heaven,
 consisting of saints, and angels—even to the presence of God himself
 —and to Jesus, the mediator of this blessed covenant; whose blood 24.
 did not cry, like that of Abel, for vengeance; but called down
 mercy.
 Take care therefore that you reject not so gracious a call: for 25.
 if they who apostatized from the Mosaic law—a law delivered only
 by the mediation of man, were punished with death; what punish-
 ment do they deserve, who reject the evidence of the Son of God 26.

18. *The mount that might be touched.* I cannot find there are any copies, authorizing that reading, which, one should suppose, the sense requires—*The mount that might not be touched.* If we take the expression, as we read it, we must consider it as barely expressing an *earthly mount*—a mount that was the *object of our senses*—that *might be touched*—in opposition to the heavenly one.

21. It is supposed, that St. Paul alludes in this passage about Moses to the LXX translation of Deut. ix. 19. *εμφροσ; ειμαι δια τον θυμον.*

24. The apostle probably alludes to Gen. iv. 10. *Thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.*

26. Alluding to Haggai ii. 6. 7.

F f f f

from

- from heaven? That voice, which at first shook the earth, at the giving of the law, we are assured by the prophet, shall once more shake, not the earth only; but heaven itself: that is, the law, which was but a worldly institution, is now fulfilled in the gospel, which adds heaven to the scheme.—There is something farther observable in this prophecy. The expression *once more* indicates a change; and that the former institution should be superseded by the latter.—We have now therefore an institution, which fully enables us to pay that true worship to God, which he expects; but at the same time we must remember, that in proportion to the greatness of the advantage, a penalty is annexed to our disobedience.

CHAP.
XIII.

- I shall conclude my epistle with inculcating a few practical duties.—Among these, let charity take the lead. Make no distinction between Jew, and Gentile converts. As there is often a resort of strangers among you, be ready to shew your hospitality to all. The patriarchs often entertained angels: you may often entertain saints.—Forget not those, who are in a state of suffering for the gospel; whether they are in bonds; or in any other affliction; remembering, that, in these times, you are all liable to the same trials.—Marriage is certainly an honourable state; but every other connection between the sexes is absolutely forbidden.—Be moderate in all your desires, and satisfied with what you have; trusting in God's promise to provide for you, and protect you.—Remember with affection, and zeal the instruction, and holy example of those first professors of the christian faith, who have gone before

2. *Some have entertained angels unawares.* This is rather intended as an *encomium* on hospitality, than as a *motive* to it.—The Indian Bramins turn this sentiment into a *motive*; instructing their disciples, that superior beings often descend in likeness of ordinary travellers, and reward such as shew kindness to them.

7. It is rather supposed, that St. Paul, in this passage, alludes to their dead, than living pastors: and that the present tense stands for the imperfect. He mentions their living pastors, ver. 17. See Pyle, Doddridge, &c..

you; and laid down their lives for it's sake: and keep always
 in memory the great end, which inspired them—the everlasting
 promises of our blessed Lord: and let these promises keep you steady
 in your faith, and in the grace of God; which you will find more
 productive of happiness, than the ceremonies of the law ever were.
 The Jew indeed, while he continues such, cannot partake of the
 christian altar. By his own law he cannot. The bodies of those
 beasts, which were sacrificed for the expiation of sin, were carried
 without the camp, and burnt, but never eaten. As Christ ful-
 filled that type, he was put to death without the city. Of his
 body therefore the Jew, while he continues such, cannot par-
 take. But let us christians follow him without the gate; bear-
 ing patiently every reproach, which the Jew can lay upon us;
 and considering not this earthly Jerusalem, but heaven, as our
 home.—Through Christ then let us offer up our praises, and
 thanksgivings to God; always remembering, that the best sacri-
 fice is a holy life.—Pay all proper respect to your spiritual pastors,
 who watch over you. God grant they may give an account of
 their ministry among you with joy! Their sorrow will certainly
 bespeak your unprofitableness under their instruction.—Let us
 be the subject of your constant prayers; particularly that we may
 soon be delivered from our enemies. However ill-treated we are,
 I hope our preaching, and conversation, hath ever been sincere
 and inoffensive.

May the God of peace, who raised up Christ from the dead,
 accepting his blood as an atonement for sin, assist you in living
 obediently to his will, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom
 be glory, and honour, for ever, and ever, Amen!

11. See Levit. xvi. 27.

22. I hope you will receive the exhortation of this short letter with
23. that kindness, with which it is written : and as Timothy is now
at liberty, I shall be able soon to accompany him in a visit to
you.
24. Salute all the elders of the church in our name ; and accept the
salutation of all the brethren in Italy.
25. Grace be with you all. Amen !

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

P R E F A C E.

T O T H E

E P I S T L E O F S T. J A M E S.

THIS epistle was written by James, the son of Alpheus, sometimes called James the less; or James the just. He is supposed also to have been the first bishop of Jerusalem, and is mentioned in scripture as our *Lord's brother*; which probably means only a near relation. The other James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, suffered martyrdom very early in the christian æra*.

This epistle stands foremost of the seven epistles, which are called *catholic*, from their addressing no particular church; but the whole body of believers; tho one, or two of them are addressed to particular persons.

In this epistle, the apostle first encourages his christian readers to bear with patience the trials they should meet with; and consider them as sent from God; and improve them to the purposes of religion. He presses upon his readers meekness, and gentleness to each other, as the test of their sincerity; and highly blames all partiality of behaviour between man and man, as wholly inconsistent with christian charity. He shews that faith itself, without charity, is of no avail—and inforces his doctrine by several examples. He dwells next on the government of the tongue: and in the beginning of the IVth chapter, addresses him-

* See Acts xii. 2.

self, as is generally supposed, to the *unbelieving Jews*. But, at the eleventh verse of the same chapter, returning again to his christian readers, he taxes them with too much worldly mindedness; and strictly enjoins them, as he began, to be patient, and forbearing under their persecutions. He then mentions the practice of swearing (to which from Jewish custom, they were probably much addicted) and strictly forbids it: concluding with an earnest exhortation to endeavour to draw sinners to repentance.

The authenticity of this very interesting part of the sacred canon seems never to have been questioned in early times. Indeed it could not; for it is found in the Syriac version; which is supposed to have been made as early as the beginning of the second century. But it is very remarkable, that Luther took offence at it; and wished to exclude it from the other scriptures. The apostle's idea of justification, it is imagined, was the stumbling-block. It is said however by Wolfius, and others, that Luther lived to change his opinion.

GENERAL EPISTLE

O F

S T. J A M E S.

JAMES, a servant of God, and Christ, to all the Jewish christians, in whatever parts dispersed—greeting!

Consider it, my brethren, as matter rather of joy, than of grief, that you are exercised with various trials; as by these you learn submission to the divine will. When your hearts are truly formed by this holy exercise, you have attained the perfection of religion. Through human power indeed this holy temper is not to be attained. It is fervent prayer to God, that will draw his assistance on the pious endeavours of his servants. But your prayers must be founded in faith. The unsteady christian must never expect, his petitions will reach the throne of God. Our holy religion furnishes proper consolation to every station of life. Are we in a low condition? Let us consider to what a heavenly state we are exalted. Are we reduced from better circumstances? God hath providentially re-

CHAP.

I.

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1. The twelve tribes still existed, at least in foreign parts, as may be learned from Josephus, and others; tho we read only of two, who returned *in form* from captivity. See Lardner's Cred. p. I. chap. III.

moved

moved us from a multitude of temptations, which might have oppressed us; and has, at worst, only taken from us, what in course we must presently give up. Bear the trials then of this world with pious resignation; and look forward to that reward, which awaits your perseverance.

Nor let any man pretend to excuse himself by saying, God threw temptations in his way. It is impious to suppose, that a pure being can be the author of sin. Every man's sins are certainly on his own head. He suffers his lusts to intice him. Hence sin is produced; hence death came into the world; and hence man's lost condition. Do not then, my brethren, fall into so pernicious an error; but consider God, unchangeable in his nature, as the author only of good. Through his free grace he created us. Through his free grace he hath redeemed us. Under a sense therefore of God's goodness to us, let us behave kindly to each other. Let us be humble-minded—open to conviction—and particularly careful not to mix heat, and animosity with our religious differences. The passionate advocate never advances the cause of religion. Lay aside therefore every degree of bitterness. That holy gospel, which is to save your souls, can be received only in the spirit of meekness. Remember, that religion does not consist in hearing the truth; but in practising it. Every thing else is self-deceit. The gospel is the great rule of life, and manners; and he, who does not use it as such, is like a man, who looks merely in a glass for curiosity; but leaves it instantly, without examining what defects in his appearance he should rectify. He only can receive any advantage from the gospel, who examines it so as to govern himself by it's precepts. Nor must he consider his religion as sincere; if it lead him into uncharitable

13. God's being the author of evil, has been an apology for wickedness, we see, ever since the establishment of christianity.

and bitter language, instead of those benevolent actions, and that heavenly conversation, in which religion so much consists.

Besides the animosities, which I fear may prevail among you, I must take notice of another thing, which is exceedingly wrong; and that is your partiality to people in higher stations. If dress influence you on one hand; or mean apparel, on the other; you certainly guide your decisions by a very unchristian rule. Consider, my brethren, how your almighty Father acts. Doth he make any difference between the poor, and the rich? Are they not all equal heirs of his promises? Yet these poor you have despised; notwithstanding the rich are they, who chiefly oppress you—and prophane that holy Name, which you revere. That most excellent rule of your religion, to *love your neighbour as yourself*, teaches you a different practice; and strongly opposes all this unjust partiality. For there is such a connection between all the duties of religion; that he who lives in the known breach of one, would break any of the rest, if he were under the same temptation. The general precept of loving our neighbour, equally enjoins every duty to him. He therefore who is guilty of one offence against his neighbour, would as readily be guilty of another. But let me hope, that you regulate your actions, not by Jewish prejudices, which make exceptions to persons; but by that equal law of christianity, which prescribes universal

C H A P.

II.

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4. It is not easy to say, in what manner the apostle supposes this partiality to have wrought: but it is probable he means in their *judicial decisions*. The word *synagogue*, in the original, (ver. 2) rather means *here a court of justice*, than an assembly met to worship God. Impartiality is the characteristic of the one, and devotion of the other. The Talmudists expressly say, that if a poor man, and a rich man plead together, they must both either sit, or stand. Beza says, that the expression, which we translate, *judges of evil thoughts*, is a Hebraism; and therefore he translates it, *judices, male ratiocinantes—judges who reason ill*.

11. Some translate *he*, *be*; and refer it to the *lawgiver*. Others translate it *it*; and refer it to the *royal law*. Both senses are good.

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love

13. love. The unmerciful, and malicious man, you know, by the whole tenor of the gospel, is laying up for himself future mischief: while mercy to man, will certainly meet a return of mercy from God.
14. Nay farther, be assured, that without works of charity, even the great christian principle of faith is of no avail. Can faith alone, do you suppose, save you? See how it appears in common life. A
15. 16. person in distress presents himself to you. You tell him you are fully convinced of his unhappy condition; and heartily wish him relief. But if your belief of his distress carry you no farther than
17. good wishes, is it of any advantage? Just in the same way, faith, unaccompanied by good works, signifies nothing. And it is an
18. undoubted truth, that there is no way of shewing the soundness of
19. your faith, but by the purity of your lives.—Nor is this any new doctrine. Faith, under the Jewish religion, had just the same tendency, as under the christian. If the Jew merely believed in God, he did no more, than the devils do; who believe and tremble.
20. Such a faith, unaccompanied by works, was dead. Was not
21. Abraham's faith evidenced by works, when he offered up Isaac on
22. the altar? Was it not this mode of faith, which shewed his
23. sincerity? Was it not through this, he was justified? And was it not this, which gained him the honourable title of the Friend of
24. God? You see then that by works a man is justified; and not by
25. faith only.—The case of Rahab was the same. If she had professed

23. Gen. xv. 6. 2 Chron. xx. 7. Isa. xli. 8.

23. It is remarkable, that St. Paul quotes this very text (Romans iv. 3.) to prove that Abraham was *justified by faith*; which St. James produces to shew, *that he was justified by works, and not by faith only.*

25. This is the third time, in which *Rahab the harlot* is mentioned in the New Testament. The reason why she is thus particularized (for the apostle might have found many other instances of faith,) may be first to shew the eminence of *her faith*, which distinguished itself in believing

professed her faith only in God, it had been nothing; but she shewed the sincerity of it by her works—by receiving, and dismissing the spies. Thus as the body without the soul is dead; so the Jewish faith formerly, and the christian faith now, are dead also; unless actuated by that invivifying Spirit, which draws faith into action.

26.

C H A P.
III.

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If then professing your faith alone, be not sufficient to make a christian, you may be assured, it is much less so, to make a teacher. Let a man be careful therefore in taking upon himself this office. By misleading others he contracts double guilt. We have all our failings; but the religious christian is so far from abusing the use of speech by indiscrete teaching, that he is careful even in his common conversation. A strict care over his words, he knows, is one of the best preservatives against sin. He, who can govern his tongue, may be said to govern his life; just as the bit guides the horse; and the helm, the ship. Tho the tongue is a small instrument, it's power is great. How mischievous a flame is often raised by a spark? Such a spark is the tongue. It is kindled

believing in the true God, amidst a nation of idolaters. Secondly, because David, as is commonly understood, was descended from her, and afterwards Christ.—Many interpreters however do not allow that she ought to be stigmatized by the name of *harlot*; but find the word, which is so translated, may mean a person *who took hire for the entertainment of guests at her house*. The Jewish spies therefore applied to her merely for lodging.

1. The Jewish zealots greatly affected the office of teachers.—St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. i. 7.) rebukes these forward teachers: and again, in Romans (ii. 19). St. James uses the same language here.

2. The word *πλαιομεν* properly signifies *we trip*. The general course of our life, says Dr. Barrow, is called in scripture *a way*: the particular passages of it, *steps*: a regular course of right acting, *walking uprightly*: and when we act amiss, (*πλαιομεν*) *we trip*.

6. The tongue, says the text, is *ο κοσμος της αδικιας*; which we translate, *a world of iniquity*. Elſner (in loc.) gives this expression, a singular, and ingenious turn; the tongue, says he, is *the adorning of unrighteousness*: alluding to the many glosses, and excuses it is apt to make for wickedness. But I think this interpretation more ingenious, than just.

7. 8. in hell; and sets fire to the world. Full of deadly poison, it is more pernicious than serpents—more furious, than the fiercest wild beast.
9. 10. How shocking is it to consider, that that tongue, which was given us
11. to bless God, is employed in cursing our fellow-creatures. Such contradictions appear in no part of the creation, but in man. We never see the fountain produce sweet water, and bitter; nor the
12. 13. tree bear different kinds of fruit. Whoever therefore among you, pretends to real wisdom, let him shew it in a restrained, gentle,
14. and holy conversation; assuring himself, that where strife, and emulation prevail, there may be boasting of wisdom; but it is
15. certainly of that kind, which springs from worldly, and sensual
16. motives: it's fruit is mischief, and confusion. Whereas heavenly
17. wisdom is pure, and gentle, and open to conviction; and leads to all that holiness, which possesses the mind of every peaceable man.

CHAP.
IV.



1. And here, my brethren, let me remind you of that calamitous state, to which your nation is now reduced by your seditions, and quarrels. Those bad passions, which mislead your tongues, mislead
2. 3. also your actions. Your whole lives are given up to temporal views; which lead you to violence, and mischief: and tho you still preserve an outward form of worship; yet your petitions being wholly void
4. of true devotion, are unacceptable to God. You apostates from the truth! know you not that he, who is the friend of the world, is
5. the enemy of God? In vain you search the scriptures. The Spirit
6. of truth can never dwell in an envious heart. The grace of God

7. *Δαμασκηται* might more properly be rendered *subdued*, than *tamed*. All kinds of animals have certainly been subdued by man; but cannot well be said to have been *tamed*, or *reclaimed*.

2. Bowyer conjectures, that *φονευετε* should be read *φθονετε*; *you envy*.

6. This epistle is supposed to have been written about the year sixty-two; when the wild, and frantic madness of the Jews, in various places, was drawing upon them apace those dreadful calamities, which soon overwhelmed them. This part of the epistle therefore, of course, must be considered as addressed to the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation.

resists the proud; but flows in full measure upon the humble.—
Lay aside then all worldly-mindedness: resist the devil: turn truly 7. 8. 9. 10
to God: humble yourselves before him: wash away your sins by
repentance: and God will open to you the gates of mercy.

And now, my brethren in Christ, let me next address myself 11.
to *you*. Tho you have accepted the grace of God; yet be not
harsh in condemning those, who are not so happy. This is making
yourselves judges of God's laws; instead of being humble observers
of them. Do you pretend to issue that sentence, which can come 12.
only from the great Lawgiver himself? Look nearer home. I find 13.
even among *you* too much of this worldly spirit. You depend,
in your worldly schemes, too much on yourselves, and on your own
prudence; not considering the uncertainty of all human things;
which points out to you the necessity of depending on God. This 14.
is a kind of confidence, my brethren, which springs from an evil 15. 16.
root: and in you, who know better, it is certainly so much worse. 17.
You will soon be spectators of that misery, and distress, which is
coming upon the powerful leaders of the Jews. What will be the
end of all their wealth? They have hoarded it up as an increase
of their distress at this time. Their frauds, and injustice will then
rise against them. The cry of their iniquities will reach to heaven;
and of those pleasurable lives, which have been spent as in a heathen
riot on a day of sacrifice. But, above all, for their having put to
death the Messiah, are they chiefly punished with this dreadful ca-
lamity.

C H A P.
V.
1. 2. 3.

11. The resuming the address here to *christians* is not directly specified, yet it seems to be understood; and so it is interpreted by the best commentators.

3. The *last days* is one of the evangelical expressions to denote the dissolution of the Jewish government, on the establishment of christianity.

5. Some interpreters suppose the apostle here means their surfeiting themselves with pleasure, as beasts were fatted for sacrifice.

7. Be you however, my brethren, (persecuted and distressed as you are,) patient, and resigned; waiting for that happy time, which will finish all your afflictions. See with what labour the husbandman
8. toils through the year, in expectation of his harvest. And shall not you live in patient hope of that happiness which is to last through all eternity? Strengthen your faith then with this great
9. view of the glory of God. Lay aside all resentment against your persecutors (which in every light is irreligious) and leave them in
10. 11. the hands of almighty justice. Take the prophets as examples of suffering. Read the account of that holy sufferer Job. There see the goodness of the Lord in all the distresses of his patient servants; and how graciously he reaches out his hand to sustain
12. them.—As I exhort you thus to lay aside all persecuting thoughts, let me exhort you also to lay aside that common Jewish practice of swearing. Swearing in common conversation, either by God, or any of his creatures, is utterly forbidden by christianity.
13. Finally, my brethren, turn every circumstance of life to your
14. 15. 16. spiritual advantage. Are any among you in distress? Let them
pray

6. 7. The address likewise in this chapter seems to be made to two different sorts of people—hardened Jews—and Jewish converts. In the 6th verse they seem to be taxed with the death of Christ—in the 7th they are addressed as persons, who ought to be patient unto the coming of the Lord.—The expression, *And he doth not resist you*, is commonly understood interrogatively; and may therefore be rendered, as I have explained it.—Some however are inclined to believe, from the internal evidence of this epistle, that it was addressed only to those Jews, who professed christianity. Had the apostle written to unbelieving Jews, he would have endeavoured, one should think, to persuade them to embrace the christian faith. He would have testified the resurrection of Christ; and brought arguments from the prophets to convince them that he was the Messiah. But nothing of this appears. His design seems only to build up those in the christian practice, who had already embraced the christian faith.—I leave these arguments to the reader's judgment.

15. The persons here mentioned are such as (1 Cor. xi. 30) had drawn upon themselves God's displeasure for their sins. These were visitations known in the early ages of the church. We read, that death, in some cases, was inflicted; and St. Paul sometimes threatens his back-sliding

pray to God. Are they happy? Let them praise him. Are they under God's correcting hand for their sins? Let them send for the elders of the church, who receiving their confession, and resolutions of obedience, will pray over them: and the prayers of the faithful shall raise them again to health; and their sins shall be forgiven. Prayer is our most effectual intercourse with God. On the prayers of Elijah, who was a mere man like us, the heavens were shut up; and rain fell not for more than three years. On his praying again, the rains fell; and the earth produced fruit.

17.

18.

fliding converts; that he will *visit them with a rod*.—Such cases however must not be drawn into modern example. The elders of the church may still, and ought still to pray with sick people: but we have no authority to suppose the prayer of faith will restore them to health.—I know no greater source of fanaticism, than the application of apostolic powers to modern times.—As to the *anointing with oil* here mentioned, it was certainly practised in the ancient church. We read of it again in Mark (vi. 13). But the stress is not laid on the *oil*; but on the *prayer of faith*. Our Saviour in many of his miracles, used *external signs*; and for the same reason *anointing* might be used, which was customary among the Jews. Be it however as it may, there is a great difference between anointing a sick person, in order to *his recovery*; and anointing him professedly *when he is dying*, as a mean of sanctification. See a note on Mark vi. 13.

16. *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. This passage the papist thinks very authoritative with regard to the worship of saints. He argues, a fortiori, that if the prayers of a good man avail much; the prayers of a saint, or an angel, must avail more.—But he ought to consider, that altho the prayers, and intercessions of a *good man* are allowed, and indeed enjoined; all prayers to angels are totally forbidden (see Col. ii. 18.) and the reason is obvious; we cannot pray to a saint, or angel, without ascribing to him the prerogative of God, in hearing our prayers, which in fact, makes an act of prayer an act of idolatry. We request *the prayers of men* on no such reasons. We do not pray *to men*; but *for* them. God may have enjoined prayer for our fellow-creatures for our own sakes. It certainly tends greatly to meliorate the heart; and, in the apostle's language, to *provoke unto love, and good works*. Heb. x. 24.—*Effectual prayer availeth much*, as in our translation, is a contradiction. *Ενεργητικόν*, means rather *energetic*.

17. The case of Elijah, here alluded to, seems to be this. He feared, from God's threatenings against idolatry, that the whole land should be destroyed; and therefore he prayed for a drought, in order to bring the people to repentance by a slighter punishment. The apostle's inference is, that the slighter punishment of sickness was intended to save the *soul from death*.

Among

19. 20. Among all the works of charity, that of saving a soul from death ; and covering up, as it were, the iniquities of a sinner, is the most pleasing to God.
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19. 20. These two last verses are connected with the 16th. We are there directed to endeavour the recovery of a sinner ; and here we find, how acceptable a work it is to God.

END OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

FIRST, AND SECOND EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

ST. PETER is supposed to have lived chiefly in Judea; tho he carried the gospel into several parts of Greece. He visited Rome also, where he is said to have suffered martyrdom under the emperor Nero. From hence both his epistles seem to have been written, a little before his death; to which he alludes, as an event at hand*. They may be considered therefore as an affectionate legacy; and were, no doubt, considered as such by the converts, to whom they were addressed; tho some doubt hath arisen, who these converts were. Many interpreters have conceived his epistles to have been written to Jewish christians: others again have thought they were written only to Gentiles. Dr. Lardner hath examined both sides with great accuracy; and concludes, they were written to *all* christian converts; but *chiefly* addressed to those of Gentile extraction.

In his first epistle St. Peter exhorts his christian readers to persevere in their religious principles on various motives. He inculcates universal love—purity of life—obedience to government—the observance

* II. Pet. i. 14.

of relative duties—and christian gentleness in all situations, even in that of suffering. He lastly addresses the ministers of the gospel; and concludes with some general instructions.

The second epistle begins as the first, with exhortations to perseverance in holiness. The apostle then warns his hearers against false prophets, and deceivers—reminds them of God's judgments; and concludes with exhortations to true religion from a view of eternity.

FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE

O F

S T. P E T E R.

C H A P.

1.

1. 2.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all the christian converts, scattered through different parts of Asia; who having embraced the gospel, lead lives answerable to it, and hope for salvation through the death of Christ—grace and peace be multiplied unto you!

Blessed be God evermore, who hath raised us, by the resurrection of Christ, to the hope of an eternal inheritance; which is

3. 4. 5.

2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.* On this passage the doctrine of predestination to future happiness, greatly depends. But, I think, it receives little support from it. If we join this verse to the preceding one, from which it is separated only by a comma, we find that all the christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, &c. are the *elect*. But nothing can be more absurd than to suppose so large a body of people were all in a state of salvation: so that nothing can be collected from the passage, but that the Gentiles were pointed out by *prophecy*, or the *foreknowledge of God*, to be ingrafted into the christian church.

5. *Kept through faith*, says our translation: but the original (*δια πίστεως*) may rather perhaps signify, *during faith*. The preposition *δια* has various significations; and, I believe, among others, may admit this. As *δια νόμου* during the time of the law. Rom. iv. 13. *δια τῆς σαρκὸς* during our abode in the body. 2 Cor. v. 10. The original word *φρηνόμενος* is very strong; as if the faithful in Christ were preserved, as in an impregnable garrison.

H h h h 2

reserved

6. reserved for us, if we persevere in our faith. This hope ought to be the source of all your happiness; tho it may, during this life,
7. engage you in trials, and afflictions. These, as a furnace tries gold, will purify your faith more and more; and draw you to Christ.
8. 9. And tho you were never blessed with a sight of your Saviour, as many of your fellow-christians have been; yet you have evidence sufficient to believe on him—and to rejoice in the hope of that
10. 11. salvation, which is the end of your faith. The evidence indeed of all the holy prophets is sufficient; who, through the Spirit of God, foresaw these things; and testified of the sufferings of Christ, and
12. of his glorious state, that should follow. Their testimony agreed, that this great revelation should not take place in their days: they only predicted, what should afterwards be preached under the influence of the Holy Spirit—that great dispensation of God, which even the angels examine with astonishment.
13. Let these thoughts therefore keep you firm in your profession;
14. 15. 16. and in the holy expectation of the last great day. Utterly detesting those abominable impurities, in which you once lived; become the obedient children of God: and let his purity be your pattern,
17. as you are directed in scripture. You are assured, that God is no respecter of persons; but judgeth every man according to his work. Live therefore in a constant course of watchfulness, and apprehension of danger.
18. 19. As an inducement to you to add your own utmost endeavours to God's kindness, consider how precious your souls are in his sight. You have been redeemed, not with the corruptible things
20. of this world, silver, and gold; but with the blood of Christ.

11. The Spirit which inspired the prophets, is here called the Spirit of Christ.

12. The angels desiring to look into the mysteries of christianity hath been thought by some to allude to the posture of the cherubims over the mercy-seat.

16. See Levit. xi. 44—xix. 2—xx. 7, 26.

And this redemption was pre-ordained from the foundation of the world; tho it is opened only to us at this time. Let it therefore excite in you a trust in that God, who by raising up Christ from the dead, gave you the strongest foundation for faith and hope.

Since then you have given yourselves up to the profession of this holy religion, shew it in the performance of that great duty, in which it particularly engages you, the universal love of mankind; considering yourselves now not of an earthly lineage; but as born of God, through Christ. Every thing human, as well as all the productions of nature, are subject to decay: but the religion of the gospel is that holy dispensation, which the prophet describes as enduring for ever. Considering yourselves therefore as born anew into this holy religion, lay aside all malice, and guile, and hypocrisy, and evil-speaking; and like children fed on simple diet, receive in your hearts the pure principles of the gospel; and taste the grace of God. Let all your worldly prejudices be dispelled. Consider yourselves as forming a part of a nobler temple, than that of the Jews; and in which a much more spiritual sacrifice is offered to God through Christ. This is agreeable to the prophecy of Isaiah; *Behold I lay in Sion a corner-stone; and whatever rests on it, shall be firmly established.*—Thus the Messiah is characterized to the true believer. But to the unbelieving Jew, he is held out by one prophet, tho the head-stone in the corner, uniting Jew, and Gentile in one building, *yet disallowed by the builders*: and by another prophet he is represented as a *stone of stumbling, and a rock*

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C H A P.
II.
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25. See Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8.

6. Isa. xxviii. 16.

7. Psalm cxviii. 22.

8. Isa. viii. 14.—The expression, *whereunto they were appointed*, is much the same, as that in Acts xiii. 48, *ordained to eternal life*. Those were appointed to destruction, because of their wickedness: and these were ordained to salvation, because of their obedience.

9. *of offence* to those, who being wilfully disobedient, draw upon themselves that punishment, which God hath appointed. But you, who have embraced the gospel, are considered by God as the inheritors of all those holy blessings, which were promised to the Jews. You now display more eminently the glory of God in being drawn from darkness to light, than the Jews anciently did. Tho you were before considered as a race, not deserving notice; you are now received more fully into the favour, and mercies of God, than they ever were.
- 10.
11. Fully impressed then, my brethren, with these high ideas of the dignity of your heavenly calling, consider yourselves only as passengers through this world; and abstain from all its guilty pleasures,
12. which debase, and corrupt the soul. Among your Gentile neighbours let your conduct be particularly guarded. Tho they consider you now as ill-disposed people; they may begin to admire your innocent and pious behaviour; and may at length be led to serious thought, in some alarming day of visitation.
13. 14. Submit peaceably to whatever government you live under; and to every department of it. And let this be done in obedience to the will of God. This also is the most effectual way of silencing the prejudices, and ignorance of your adversaries. You are free in one sense indeed: but you must not consider your freedom, as a privilege against the rights of government; but merely in a spiritual
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9. Exod. xix. 5, 6.

13. Ideas had gotten abroad, that the christian religion was a kind of manumission from all government: especially among the Jewish christians; who added their national prejudices to these opinions.

14. *Unto governors, as unto them, that are sent by him.* Here is a plain designation of the governors of provinces, *sent by* the Roman emperors.

15. St. Peter's language is sometimes very strong. The word *φίμην*, which is here rendered *put to silence*; properly signifies *to muzzle*; which in one expressive word shews the apostle's opinion of these adversaries of christianity.

sense

ſenſe. In the mean time, pay ſuch reſpect to the ſeveral orders of men, as is due to them. Shew an affectionate regard to each other, from whatever ſtock you become chriſtians. Adhere firmly to your religion, and perform all the duties of good citizens. 17.

In private life, let the ſame rules be obſerved. The ſlave, who becomes a chriſtian, is ſtill a ſlave. His religion muſt enable him to ſubmit even to an imperious maſter. If a man ſuffer patiently for an offence, he deſerves little praiſe. But when he bears, with reſignation to God, unjuſt uſage, God will not fail to accept his patient ſufferings. Remember always, as the pattern of your imitation, the great example of your bleſſed Saviour; who tho innocent himſelf, bore all the reproaches, and cruelty of his perſecutors with holy ſubmiſſion to God. He bore even the puniſhment of the croſs, for the ſins of mankind. In ſhort, you ſhould conſider yourſelves as having formerly been ſheep going aſtray; but as now brought to the fold of Chriſt. 18.
19. 20.
21.
22. 23.
24.
25.

The ſame rule obtains alſo between man and wife. Religion makes no change in this union. If a chriſtian woman be married to a heathen; let her ſtill obſerve the duties of her ſtation. Her mild, and modeſt behaviour may perhaps bring over her unbelieving husband. But let her truſt to the ornament of her mind; not of her dreſs. Like the holy women of old, like Sarah, and others, who lived in patriarchal times, let her behave with mild ſubmiſſion to her husband; and fill her ſtation, however difficult, with meekneſs, and conſtancy.—Let the husband alſo treat the wife with gentleneſs, and kindneſs; and conſider her, tho a heathen, as an heir of the ſame promiſe; with whom he may hereafter be able to unite in the ſame worſhip. C H A P.
III.
1. 2.
3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

In concluſion, my brethren, ſhew every degree of kindneſs to each other; and bleſs your perſecutors, however ill they uſe you. 8.
9.

1. *Ανε λόγου*—without preaching—merely by her example.

10. 11. 12. Such a disposition will change the curse of an enemy into the blessing of God. Even in a temporal way this gentleness has it's effect. You may consider the prophet's words, as declaring the happiness both of this world, and the next. *He that loveth life, and would see good days; let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips, that they speak no guile. Let him leave off evil, and do good: let him seek peace with his utmost endeavour. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous; and his ears are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

13. A christian behaviour is certainly the best means of preserving
 14. you from the evils of this world: and if you happen to fall into them; especially if you are persecuted for your religion, it is the best means of supporting you under them. The christian sufferer even finds matter of joy in his sufferings. Be not afraid then of
 15. any of the evils, which this world can bring upon you. Devote yourselves to God; and he will assist you in giving an answer to all, who demand a reason of your faith: but let that answer always be given in the spirit of meekness to man; and of reverence to
 16. God.—Under the influence of a good conscience therefore, it
 17. may be hoped, you will silence the accusations of your persecutors. But if it be the will of God, that you should suffer, you will have
 18. the comfort of suffering with innocence; after the example of our blessed Saviour; who laid down his life for the sins of others;
 19. 20. and was afterwards raised, as you also shall be, to everlasting glory. That same Spirit, which warned the ancient world, in the days
 21. of Noah, to escape the threatened evil, offers salvation to you through baptism, of which the ark is a kind of type; holding out

19. Wicked persons are often represented by Isaiah, and other sacred writers, under the idea of prisoners. I have endeavoured, as much as I could, in this difficult passage, to give what appears to me the *connexion*, and *scope* of the apostle's argument.

20. Saved by water; δι' ὕδατος, carried safely through the water.

the assurance of that salvation through the resurrection of Christ ; who is now ascended into heaven, and seated in infinite glory.

22.

Learn then to suffer after the example of Christ ; and let this mortified spirit lead you from all the sinful gratifications of life ; and make you feel, that there is no true enjoyment, but in obedience to the will of God. Long have you Gentile christians lived in the practices of a wicked world. It is now high time to renounce them all ; and to set against the reproaches of worldly men, the awful reflection, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The gospel was preached to you Gentiles for this reason, that however you may be judged by worldly men ; your souls may be raised hereafter in the day of Christ. Let this great consideration therefore sink deep within you, that the end of all things is at hand. Let it urge you to be serious, devout, and charitable. Charity covers both your own sins, and the sins of others. Communicate with each other the things of this world. Communicate also your spiritual gifts, as good stewards of the different graces of God : and whether you expound in the church, or minister, or perform any other office, consult only the glory of God through Christ ; to whom be honour and praise for ever, and ever, Amen !

C H A P.
IV.

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Once more, my brethren, let me beseech you not to be disheartened by the persecutions, which await you : but rather rejoice,

6. I find no interpretation, which, I think, reconciles this difficult passage with the context, so well as this.

7. Some interpreters refer the end of all things, to the conclusion of the Jewish state. I think the conclusion of the Jewish state has little to do with the present argument. Tho the end of all things might not literally be at hand : yet every man's death is the end of all things to him. Our Saviour speaks the same language. Matt. xxiv. 26.

8. *Fervent charity*, says the text : *αγάπη ἐκτενής* in the original ; *continued, uninterrupted charity*—that embraces all mankind—and not in a desultory, but in a uniform manner. It covers the faults of others, by bearing, forbearing, and forgiving. It covers our own, through that forgiveness, which God has promised to those, who forgive others ; and also because charity, being the fulfilling of the law, leads directly to a life of holiness.

- that as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, you shall also be
 15. partakers of his glory.—In the mean time, it is as reproachable
 16. for a christian to suffer as an offender ; as it is glorious for him to
 17. 18. suffer for his religion.—Thus amidst the general ruin, which is
 coming upon these wicked times, the christian shall have his share.
 But his afflictions will be light, in comparison of that great over-
 19. throw, which shall destroy the Jewish nation. Let him therefore,
 conscious of his own innocence, and the goodness of his cause,
 commit himself, in all his distresses to God, his faithful preserver.

C H A P.

V.

1. 2.

- To these general instructions, let me add a particular one to
 the elders of the several churches ; whom, with the authority of
 an apostle, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, I exhort to
 attend diligently to their respective charges, with that ready, dis-
 interested mind, which shews them to be under no constraint.
 3. Among other things, let them avoid a haughty, imperious behaviour.
 4. Let them rather instruct their flock by an example of meekness, and
 piety ; that when the great Shepherd shall appear, he may approve
 5. their conduct. Let the younger pay a deference to the elder. Let
 a general humility take place among you ; for pride is one of those
 vices, which are most offensive to God ; and humility one of those
 virtues, which are most pleasing in his sight.

6. If then you are to shew humility to man ; you ought more especi-
 ally to humble yourselves in the sight of God, who never rewards
 7. self-exaltation. On him throw all your cares. He is your true
 8. friend, and only support, in all your distresses.

- In fine, be constantly on your guard. The wiles of the devil
 9. surround you on every side. Let your faith support you. At the
 same time, remember that your trials are not greater, than those
 10. of your brethren in different parts of the world.—May the God of
 all grace who hath opened to us an eternity of glory, confirm your
 faith

faith through your sufferings for³ Christ; to whom be ascribed all 11.
praise, and dominion for ever. Amen!

This short letter, my brethren, intended to strengthen you, in 12.
your profession, I send by Silas, a sincere professor of the faith.— 13.
The church of Babylon, which unites in the same faith with you,
unites also in this salutation.—Remember always to exercise among 14.
each other every office of charity; and may the peace of God reside
ever among you. Amen!

13. Most commentators suppose the apostle calls Rome by the name of Babylon; as it cannot
be imagined he could mean the real city of that name.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE

O F

S T. P E T E R.

SIMON Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all, who through the goodness of God, are partakers with us, of the blessings of the gospel—grace, and peace be multiplied, through the knowledge of God, and of his glorious promises in Jesus Christ!

C H A P.

I.

1. 2.

This holy religion fully opens to you the means of attaining everlasting happiness; and the completion of those great promises; which, after you have purified yourselves from the corruptions of the world, will make you partakers of a divine nature.—Endeavour therefore

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4.

5. 6. 7.

1. The beginning of this epistle, conveys much the same meaning, as the beginning of the first; and may be a comment upon it.

4. Not *the* divine nature, as our translation has it.

5. These verses are generally explained thus. Add to your *faith, courage* in professing it. To this add a distinct *knowledge of all its principles*. To this add temperance, or the *government of your passions*; and to temperance, patience, or *resignation in your distresses*. To patience add godliness, or the *sincere worship of God*. To godliness, *kindness to all your near connections*; and to kindness add a *general benevolence to all mankind*.—But if we examine this catalogue of graces, and virtues, it does not, I think, appear, that they run in any regular series. The duties to God, and man, are intermixed without any attention to exact order.—All I mean to infer, is, that the sacred writers are above the logical forms of human composition—and that the apostle just marked those virtues, which we ought most to aspire after; but did not mean a regular dependent series of them.

with

with all your care to attain these blessings of religion, adding to your faith, every virtue to God, your neighbour, and yourselves. This
 8. holy practice alone will shew the proficiency you have made in the
 9. knowledge of the gospel. He, who is deficient here, shews plainly,
 10. that he is not in a state of grace. As you are now therefore, by the
 goodness of God, members of this holy religion; see that you
 11. persevere in the practice of all christian duties; which will insure
 12. 13. you a blessed resurrection in the kingdom of Christ.—While I am
 with you, I cannot but remind you of these things; tho you are
 14. so well acquainted with them. I am assured, from what our blessed
 Lord formerly told me, that I shall soon be taken from you; and
 15. I could wish to leave on your memory, the importance of these
 16. things. Your faith in Christ, as the great Saviour of the world,
 does not rest on fable, and invention; but on the testimony
 17. 18. of eye-witnesses. I am particularly enabled to testify this great
 truth, having been admitted to that glorious vision on the mount,
 when Christ was declared, by a voice from heaven, to be the Son of
 19. God. But you have the most convincing proof of this truth from
 prophecy, which you will do well to consider as what above all
 other things tends to throw the light of truth upon your minds;
 20. 21. knowing that no prophecy is of private interpretation, or of human

14. See John xxi. 18, 19.

17. 18. See Matt. xvii. 1—Mark ix. 2, 3. Luke ix. 28.

19. It has always given me peculiar pleasure to read St. Peter's encomium on prophecy; as prophecy is the most convincing evidence of the truth of our religion. Bp. Burnet gives a remarkable instance of it's force in the conversion of that celebrated penitent, the Earl of Rochester; who was struck with nothing so much, as the comparison of Christ's death with the liiid chapter of Isaiah.—These words however, tho they appear very plain; have given occasion to much dispute. See Bowyer's conjectures.

20. The expression, *private interpretation* should, I think, check much of that readiness, with which many have applied the prophetic writings to the events of history. Many of these events have little relation to Christ's kingdom; to which all prophecy, in some shape, or other, seems intended to point.

origin; but that all the prophetic writings were dictated to holy men, for great purposes, by the Spirit of God.

C H A P.
II.
1.

But as there were false prophets under the law, so shall there be false teachers under the gospel; who shall introduce vile heresies, denying even the Lord, who bought them; and shall draw upon themselves a sudden ruin. They shall influence many; and deceive them through interested views; and bring great slander on the truth; till their destruction, which is advancing apace, shall suddenly overwhelm them.

2. 3

Nor is this destruction, which is coming upon the Jews, an extraordinary instance of God's justice. Against enormous wickedness he hath often executed severe judgments. The angels, that sinned, were driven from the presence of God. The old world was destroyed by a flood: and Sodom, and Gomorrha by fire. But from the former of these calamities, Noah, who had endeavoured to convert his unrighteous neighbours, was exempted: and from the latter Lot was delivered, who had all along opposed the wickedness of the country, in which he dwelt. Thus mercy, and judgment are equally tempered in the hands of God.—But chiefly

4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

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1. *The Lord who bought them*, is commonly interpreted of God, rather than of Christ; as the word *ἀγοράς* is never applied to Christ in the New Testament, and as the verse seems to allude to Deut. xxxii. 6; in which God is said to have *bought Israel*. But tho the words might *primarily have that meaning*, I think it more probable, that the apostle *applied* them to Christ.—By the *false teachers* who bring in *dannable heresies*, some suppose the apostle means the Nicolaitans, an abominable sect mentioned Revel. ii. 16. Church history informs us, that this sect was soon extinguished. See Mosheim vol. I. p. 116, and Dr. Whitby in locum. Whoever they were, they seem from many passages in this chapter, to have been christians—to have held heretical opinions, and to have propagated their tenets.—The *swift destruction* seems to correspond with the destruction of Jerusalem.

10. It is not easy to explain, whom the apostle means to point out in this and the following verses. Some suppose, he alludes to certain false opinions, which prevailed about heavenly beings. Others, (among whom is Dr. Lardner, see Cred. b. I. ch. VIII. p. 199) think, that some expressions in these verses allude to the riotous disposition of the Jews, which finally brought on their destruction. The chief difficulty lies in the confusion of the several ideas.

they

they, who give themselves up to uncleanness, to pride, and blasphemy, provoke the judgments of God. So far are they from imitating the mildness, and gentleness of heavenly beings, with which they profess to be so well acquainted; that, as if they were totally deprived even of human reason, they draw ruin upon themselves by blasphemously intruding into things they understand not—by the abominable impurity of their lives—and by their endeavours to lead others into the same wickedness, which they practise themselves. Like Balaam, they are continually corrupting such as will listen to them, to promote unworthy ends of their own; unmoved by the plainest appearances of God Almighty's displeasure. Like dry springs, they have no issues of life. Like tempestuous clouds, they are for ever involved in darkness. Through vanity, and sensual allurements, it is their business to mislead new converts. While they themselves are slaves to their lusts, they promise liberty to others: tho no bondage can be so severe, as the bondage of vicious passions. Such a case as theirs, is, of all others, the most calamitous. To be again entangled in the pollutions of the world, after they had once known the truth, is certainly a much more dangerous situation, than that of having never known it. It shews so innate a corruption of heart, that there is no farther hope of recovery.

C H A P.
III.

1. 2.

This is the second epistle, my brethren, I have written to you, with a view chiefly to confirm your principles by drawing your

15. In the Syriac version, it is Balaam the son of Beor. It is supposed that St. Peter writes Bosor for Beor in the Chaldee dialect.

22. The great difference of style between the iid chapter of St. Peter's second epistle, and all the other parts both of that epistle, and the former, hath been observed by all critics. Bp. Sherlock (on Proph. Diff. 1) supposes, the apostle to have extracted these passages, at least the sense of them, from some Jewish writings then extant. And this appears the rather, from comparing this chapter with the epistle of St. Jude, which seems to have been taken from the same original.

attention to the prophets, and to us the apostles of Christ. The impurities of the world will always make men enemies to religion : and you will hear them forming their objections to the promises, and threatnings of the gospel, merely because they see things continuing in the same natural order, in which they have long continued ; as if God had given no proofs even in the external world, of his power, and government ; or, as if the destruction of the earth once by water, is not proof sufficient of God's being able to destroy it a second time by fire.—Be not you, my brethren, misled by these tenets of infidelity. Time is nothing with the Almighty. Compared with eternity, a day, and a thousand years are portions of equal value. Man judging according to his own confined ideas, attributes tardiness to God ; not considering, that he is merciful, and long-suffering, and desirous, that all should come to repentance. But notwithstanding this long-suffering, when the day of the Lord does come, it will come suddenly, dissolving at once all earthly connections.

Since then, my brethren, this shall be the great issue of things, what effect should the consideration of it have on us ? What should our conversation, and behaviour in this world be, when we reflect, how soon both we, and it shall be dissolved ? But the thoughts of these things give *us* no distress. *We* rely on God's gracious promise, that we shall be restored to a new and better world—the habitation of the righteous. As you live in constant hope therefore of this glorious change ; take care always to be found in that holy state, in which you ought to meet it ; and consider every moment of delay

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15. See Rom. ii. 4.—St. Peter, with great propriety, takes this opportunity of mentioning St. Paul ; because these two epistles were written to those countries, where St. Paul had first preached ; and to those churches, which he had established. St. Peter had seen, no doubt, St. Paul's epistles ; and by mentioning his name, gives his sanction to his doctrine. Tho

- delay in the Almighty, as a new instance of his mercy to you. Thus also our beloved brother Paul hath instructed you; exhorting you to receive with holy gratitude, the long-suffering of God; considering that this goodness is intended to lead you to repentance. No doubt there is some difficulty in these things, on which I have been discoursing to you; and which they who are ill-disposed to the gospel pervert as they do other parts of scripture, to their own destruction. Take care, my brethren, that you be not led away by these errors, of which I have given you sufficient warning: but continue to increase in every holy grace; and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; to whom be glory both now, and for ever: Amen!
- 17.
- 18.

St. Paul had withstood him to his face, and rebuked him openly (Gal. ii. 11) he had no animosity on that head. These two holy apostles might err; and might have different sentiments: but as they both had one great end in view, they never lost sight of that; and were, of course, unanimous.

16. The words, *in which are some things hard to be understood*, are commonly applied to St. Paul's epistles. But the grammatical construction does not make that necessary. *Εν οἷς* being neuter, cannot agree with *ἐπιστολαίς*, which is feminine. *Εν οἷς* rather seems to refer to the things which Peter himself had been discoursing about; particularly to the *promise of his coming* (ch. iii. 4) or the *resurrection*; which was a great stumbling-block to many of the early christians. Some said the resurrection was past. Others wanting patience to wait longer for it, left the christian assemblies: and many conceiving it to be a thing impossible, gave no credit to it at all. No doubt, says the apostle, there is difficulty in these things, which the *unstable wrest*, &c.—It must not however be concealed, that some MSS of great credit read *ἐν αἷς*. But I think, it is the worse reading, on a supposition that the two readings are equally authorized: for, tho many things in St. Paul's epistles may, for obvious reasons be *hard to be understood* by us; yet one should hardly believe, that St. Paul (writing according to the wisdom given unto him) could be really *hard to be understood* by those, to whom he wrote. Nor is it likely, I think, that St. Peter, if it had been so, would have lessened the credit of St. Paul in his own churches, by giving them to understand, that he thought St. Paul an unintelligible writer.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

THREE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

IN the first of these epistles, St. John gives an idea of the general intention of the gospel ; which was founded on the fall of man ; and meant to purify his nature anew. He then dwells on christian charity ; and cautions his readers against the love of the world, which he considers as the cause of all irreligion. He exhorts to perseverance—describes the children of God—holds out the example of Christ—marks the character of the deceiver ; and of the true christian—concluding with a short proof of the truth of the gospel,

The second epistle may be called an abstract of the first. It touches, in few words, on the same points.

The third is chiefly a commendation of Gaius.

FIRST EPISTLE

O F

S T. J O H N.

CHAP.

I.

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FROM the many circumstances, my brethren, with regard to the life of Christ, to which I have been witness myself, I infer his eternal Godhead, and union with the Father, before his manifestation in the world. And on this evidence we have invited you into the same gracious fellowship in God, and Christ, which we enjoy; that your happiness in the profession of these holy truths may be as great as ours.

But you must well consider the conditional part of this gracious covenant. It is the constant tenor of the gospel, that God is a being of infinite purity; and that no one can have fellowship with him, who allows himself in the practice of any sin. On the other hand, he, who leads a life of purity, is both in communication with the christian church; and may be assured, that the blood of Christ will make atonement for all his repented sins.—Thus the whole foundation of the christian religion depends on the sinfulness

6. 7. *Light and darkness* are often used in scripture, and particularly in St. John's works, to express a *life of purity*, and a *life of wickedness*.

of

of our nature. He who denies this; and goes about to establish the righteousness of man, contradicts the whole scheme of christianity: while he, who piously confesses and forsakes his sins, shall through his Saviour's merits receive forgiveness.—My first with therefore in what I say, is to guard you, as much as possible, against sin: my second, to set before you, if you have sinned, Jesus Christ as the only propitiation for sin; and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. At the same time the only test we can give of our being the objects of this mercy, is to observe faithfully the precepts of the gospel. He who pretends to the hopes of christianity without this, may as well endeavour to reconcile the greatest contradictions: while he, who obeys the gospel, following with reverence those blessed steps, which went before him, is perfected more and more in holiness, by the love of God.

C H A P.

II.

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9. 10. 11.

12. 13. 14.

And now, my brethren, in this I give you no new commandment; for the moral law was always a rule of duty. Only thus far the commandment is new; the gospel hath explained and heightened some of the precepts of morality; particularly the duty of charity. For the practice of this duty, in it's most improved state, is the very badge of the christian profession; and he who does not thus practise it, whatever his professions may be, is still in heathen darkness. The young convert, who hath just had his sins forgiven, and been made acquainted with the mercies of God, ought to shew his thankfulness by the conscientious practice of this duty. The confirmed christian, who hath known his duty from the beginning, it

8. *Which thing is true in him, and in you*—in Christ, who gave the example—and in you, who ought to follow it.

13. Dr. Doddridge wishes to leave out this verse, which he conjectures was left out in the original. No doubt, there is an unaccountable tautology in it; and indeed in all these three verses, the 12th, the 13th, and the 14th, there is great difficulty.

may

may be hoped, will practise it. While he, who hath made no great advance; yet having seen the efficacy of the gospel in reclaiming him from sin, will feel it also in giving him a love for his neighbour.

15. Now the great point in clearing the way for the love of God, is to guard against a love for the world. This principle, you may be assured, is wholly inconsistent with a regard for the duties of religion.
16. The simplicity of the gospel, and the pride, and vanity of the world,
17. agree very ill together.—And yet one might suppose, that the transitory condition of all the pleasures of this world; and the stability of future happiness, would be strong arguments against the delusions of life.
18. Let me now remind you, that the calamities of the Jewish state are approaching fast. You have heard that deceivers will then abound. The appearance of so many at present shew, that this calamitous time is not far distant. They pretended a gospel-commission;
- 19.

18. Some interpreters, tho but few, will not allow the *last time*, to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; but rather to the short duration of human life. But the deceivers, who are so constantly represented as accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem, seem rather to connect it with that event.—The *last time* is however often a phrase of wider import. The sacred writers seem frequently to divide time into two large portions; the *former*, and the *latter*: the *former* time included the whole period before the gospel; and the *latter* time, or the *last times*, included every period after it. Agreeably to this partition of time, they sometimes speak of Christ's *first*, and sometimes of his *second* coming. His first coming, including every event of the gospel to the consummation of all things, is often also divided into smaller portions. "*Christ comes in each division, that is, as oft as he thinks fit to interpose by any signal act of his power and providence. The whole period, in which any distinct state of his kingdom is carrying on, is likewise called the LATTER TIME; and the concluding part of that period is distinguished by the name of the LAST HOUR; as if the whole of each period were considered as one day, and the close of each period, as the end or last hour of the day. Thus the time that elapsed from Christ's ascension to the destruction of Jerusalem, being one of the subdivisions before-mentioned, is called the LATTER TIMES; and the eve of it's destruction is called the LAST HOUR. He was COMING, through the whole time; HE CAME in the end of it.*" This very accurate, and judicious observation I had from Bp. Hurd. See his VIIth ser. on proph.

but

but their leaving us, plainly shewed they had different views. You, who have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are in no danger, I hope, from their deceptions. Nor do I write this to you through any diffidence: but just to mark the character of Antichrist; which consists in denying Jesus Christ to be the true Messiah. Assure yourselves that no man can deny Christ, who hath a just idea of God himself.

In the mean time, hold fast that faith, which hath been preached to you from the beginning, in the Father, and the Son; on which rest all your hopes of eternal life. Seducers will always be endeavouring to mislead you. But that divine Spirit, which hath thus far led you into the truth; will, I doubt not, preserve you in it. Consider the awfulness of that great day, when we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. As certain as God is pure, so certain is it, that none but persons of purity can stand before him. Such only he calls his children: such only are the objects of his love. At the same time, we must not expect, that the world, which rejects God, will regard his children.—But tho God is graciously pleased to call us his children, we have yet a very imperfect conception of the happiness intended for us. One thing we know, that as we shall hereafter be with Christ, we shall resemble him. And this hope should make us wholly intent on purifying our earthly nature. Every wilful sin is directly opposite to our profession. It opposes the very intention of Christ's coming; which was to take away sin. The christian religion expects a steady compliance with it's precepts. The *wilful transgressor* therefore hath no conception of it's truth.

C H A P.

III.

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6.

1. We are told in the letters of the Danish missionaries (No. 7. p. 56) that when a Malabar convert was employed to translate a catechism, in which the expression, *we shall be the sons of God*, occurred; he was struck with the boldness of it, and durst not translate it verbally; but rather wished to translate it, *we shall be permitted to kiss God's feet*.

7. Let no man, then, my brethren, deceive you. It is your holy
 8. lives alone, which make you the children of God. He, who sins
 9. wilfully, becomes the child of the devil. A real sense of religion
 10. prevents all wilful sin: and above all other sins, it will prevent
 those of hatred, and malice; which are most opposite to all our
 11. holy hopes. Brotherly love is the very badge of our profession.
 12. 13. But the wicked world, after the example of Cain, will persecute
 14. the true christian, because he is more righteous than they. Be
 you happy however in the thought, that you shall thus attain
 that heavenly temper, which will qualify you for everlasting life.
 15. He, who suffers malicious passions to get possession of his heart,
 16. effectually shuts himself out from the favour of God. What an
 example have we in Christ to rouse us to kindness, and affection!
 17. What acts of charity can we refuse to others, when we consider,
 that he laid down his life for us! And can we suppose that per-
 son to have any of this heavenly love in him, who refuses to ad-
 minister the trifling things of this world to the necessities of a
 18. brother? We may talk of charity: but it is of no value, if it
 dwell only on our lips. It must sink into the heart, and become
 19. a principle of action. It is then only that we can have any assurance
 20. before God. If we are conscious, that our charity is pretence, we
 21. should be conscious also that God sees our hypocrisy. Our con-
 22. fidence before Him can depend only on our sincerity; and it is
 23. this holiness of life, which gives efficacy to our prayers.—In
 24. fine, then, the whole sum of the christian religion consists in two
 words, faith, and love. If your lives therefore be spent under
 the influence of these two great principles, you shall enjoy a hea-
 venly communication with God; and may be assured of his favour
 by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

C H A P.
 IV.

1. And yet, my brethren, you will find much deception in the
 2. world, and many pretences to this holy influence. But you have
 one

one certain rule to detect imposters. Whoever pretends, that Jesus Christ is not the Messiah; but holds out to the people the expectation of some other deliverer, is certainly a deluder. The acknowledgment therefore of Jesus Christ as the Messiah is the first test of truth.—A second is the superiority of those powers, which God has conferred upon his holy servants.—A third, is the tendency of the doctrine they teach. The doctrine of the deluder is of a worldly nature. He speaks only to the world; and the world only are his hearers. But our doctrines have a spiritual view; and are understood only by the spiritual; and these circumstances form a distinction between them, and the doctrines of delusion.

But above all things, let us shew brotherly kindness to each other; as nothing makes us more the children of God. He that loveth not his brother, can have no knowledge of God; for God is love. How was that love discovered to us in the death of Christ! We had no love for him, when he shewed that stupendous instance of love to us in dying for our sins. How ought we then, in imitation of such goodness, to love each other!—We cannot, it is true, see God: but we have the strongest proof of his dwelling in us, if we feel our hearts full of love to each other. God will then shew that we are his, by shedding his Holy Spirit upon us; through which we testify the coming of Christ into the world; and shew that salvation depends only on him. In this great act

3. In order to understand the test, which the apostle here mentions, it is necessary to consider, that the interpretation of the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures was, at this time, matter of great controversy. The infidel Jews denied, they were fulfilled in Jesus; and interpreted them of some future Messiah. So that these opinions became a dangerous snare to the whole body of Jewish converts; who were in the way of hearing arguments of this kind, sophistically treated. They were a snare also to the heathen convert; when he found that the Jews themselves, to whom these prophecies had been given, and who might be supposed to understand them best, denied that sense of them, which he had been always taught to believe was the basis of christianity.

of our Saviour's love, we firmly trust—and are assured, that he who approaches nearest to that divine affection, which Christ shewed, approaches nearest to God. By following the example of our blessed Lord, and making ourselves like him in this world; we hope to meet his favour, and be like him in the next. When the holy flame of love hath once taken possession of our hearts, all vain fears, distress, and uneasiness are excluded, with regard both to this world, and the next.—Thus ought our blessed Saviour to be the object of our love from his great kindness to us.—But let us consider one thing well, that the love of our neighbour, must be the test of our love of God: for a man will hardly love God, who is not the object of his senses; if he hath no love for his brother, who is continually with him.—Thus we have two great tests, as well as principles, of our religion—faith, and love. The love of God consists in keeping his commandments; and if we keep the commandments of God; of course we shall love our neighbour; and shall find our happiness in our obedience. The faith of a christian, and that regenerating principle, which it introduces in the mind of man, placeth us above the world: and this faith depends on the evidences given at the baptism, and death, of Christ; and on the miracles, which he wrought through the Spirit. Two

or

6. There is always a distinction made in scripture between the *πνευμα*, or Spirit, through which miracles were wrought; and the *το αγιον πνευμα*, or Holy Ghost, through which the understanding was enlightened; and prophetic gifts, and tongues dispensed. See Heb. ii. 4, and Gal. iii. 5.—Our Saviour gave his disciples power to work miracles; and yet we are expressly told that the Holy Ghost was not then given.—There is however great difficulty, no doubt, in the last chapter of St. John's epistle.

7. I shall not enter into the dispute about this famous verse. They who wish to examine it, may consult Mills's edit. of the New Testament. Other divines also have treated it largely. A late ingenious treatise has been written professedly on the subject by George Travis, M. A. who hath endeavoured to establish the authority of this text; tho he hath had able opponents.

After

or three witnesses in all human affairs are thought sufficient. To the truth of our religion we have the testimony of three—the Father—the Son—and the Holy Ghost; who, as they are equal in power, unite also in testimony. And this *heavenly* testimony agrees also with the *earthly* one I have mentioned—the miracles, which our Saviour wrought—the evidence, that appeared at his baptism; and the evidence that appeared at his death. Such is the testimony of God to this great truth; which is certainly superior to any human testimony.

Besides, he who truly believes, feels all this evidence fully confirmed in himself. Whereas he who disbelieves, rejects the strongest testimony of God; and gives up all the hopes of his salvation; which depends on his faith in Christ, and obedience to his laws.

Thus I have endeavoured to shew you on what grounds you may hope for the mercies of God. And this will point out to you the spirit of such prayers, as will find acceptance in his sight. Particularly if any of your society is visited with sickness for his sins, let public prayers be made; and if his sin be not of such a nature, as God may think fit to punish with death, (in which case the offender must be left to the divine mercy) the devout prayers

After all, I cannot help observing, that it appears rather below the christian cause to be so zealous in defending a text, which in all ages hath been thought so very doubtful. I know not whether, for *that very reason* I should not wish to leave it in its uncertainty. The more pains we take to secure it, the more it appears as if we thought the doctrine it contains, rested solely on it's authority; which we do not by any means suppose to be the case.

10. This mode of evidence, however forcible among the first christians, who were endowed with the visible gifts of the Holy Ghost, hath been too much presumed on in modern times.

16. We have many instances in scripture of the *infliction of temporal punishments*. How far it may be agreeable to God's government now, when miraculous powers of all kinds have ceased, we know not: it is certain however we have no right to ascribe any thing of this kind to God's judgments.

16. This is a very difficult passage. I have endeavoured however to explain it agreeably to the sense of James v. 14, 15, 16, which seems to be the best comment upon it.

17. of the church will be heard. Every wilfull transgression of the
18. law is sin ; tho some sins are more heinous than others.—The
sincere christian however, by the grace of God, is in no danger
19. of these great transgressions. While the world around him lies
20. in wickedness, he enjoys the light of God. His religion hath
cleared his understanding, and he dwells in God through Christ.
21. Let the great conclusion from the whole, be, never to entangle
yourselves again in the idolatry, and pollutions of a wicked world.
Amen !

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

SECOND EPISTLE

O F

ST. JOHN.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3.

JOHN the apostle, together with all the christians of these parts, to the church at Jerusalem, and all it's members—grace, mercy, and peace from God in Christ !

It hath always been a great joy to me to find your members adhering strictly to the faith of Christ, as it hath been delivered to them. But you will remember, that when we preached faith, we

4.

1. It is a disputed point, whether the *elect lady* means some particular person, or some church in general. They who apply the phrase to a church, suppose it the church of Jerusalem; both because St. John was an apostle of the circumcision; and because the word *κεφαλα*, they think, applies best to a mother-church. Others however suppose some Asiatic church; and in particular the church of Philadelphia, to be meant.—The greater part of interpreters however give the phrase a *general*, rather than a *particular* turn. The salutation at the end, from the *children of thy elect sister* favour it: and churches are often thus stiled in scripture. See Isa. xlvii. 5, 7. And indeed there is nothing personal in the whole epistle, except perhaps the 10th verse: and that may as well admit a general interpretation. The chief argument, I think, for its being *particular*, is, that the next epistle is plainly so.

4. The word *truth* in this verse, seems to stand for the *principles* of religion. In the 5th verse the apostle speaks of the *practice*; which was to follow the *faith*, which had from the beginning been preached.

always

6. always added love to it: and there is no other way of shewing your
7. love to God, but by keeping his commandments. The world is
8. full of deceivers. You will hear it said by many; that the true
9. Messiah hath not yet appeared. But be upon your guard, lest you
10. lose at once all that happiness, which this holy faith hath promised.
11. And be assured of this, that there is no other religion in the world,
12. that is acceptable to God, but the religion of Christ.—Considering
13. the peril of the times, I would not wish you to have communication
with those, whose principles, and practice are corrupt; lest such
intercourse should corrupt you; and make you partakers of the
wicked opinions, they may propagate.
12. I have many things to say to you, on these, and other heads;
but I shall not mention them now, as I propose soon to see you.
13. All the members of this church salute you.
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7. See a note on 1 John iv. 3.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THIRD EPISTLE

O F

S T. J O H N.

C H A P.

I.

1. 2.

JOHN the apostle, to his beloved Gaius, and fellow-disciple in Christ—health, and happiness both in this world, and the next!

The accounts which I have received, of your steadiness in the faith, are highly satisfactory to me. Indeed I have no greater joy, than to hear of the holy lives of christians.—Your charity, and hospitality to all the brethren; and the assistance you give them on their several journeys, which I hear from all people, are most pleasing to me. They have been ever careful, you know, not to burthen the Gentiles; and therefore such as assist them, are greatly instrumental in promoting the interests of the gospel.

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1. Who Gaius, or Caius, was, is uncertain. Many suppose he was that person at Corinth, whom St. Paul calls his host; Rom. xvi. 23, and that he was extremely generous, and hospitable to all christians, who came there. His hospitable temper is strongly marked in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this chapter.

I should

9. I should have written, at this time, to the church in general ; but I was afraid lest Diotrephes, who seems to be fond of power, should have too much weight in opposing any thing I could say at
 10. a distance. I propose therefore to check his influence by a visit among you ; in which I shall correct both his words, and actions : particularly that violence of temper, with which he refuses to receive the brethren ; and even sets himself against those, who would
 11. receive them. Follow not such examples ; but take it for granted, that where you see a wrong behaviour ; there also you will find a
 12. want of faith.—I am glad however, that Demetrius is every where so well spoken of. In him I cannot be deceived.
13. 14. I have many things to say to you ; but I shall not make them the subject of a letter, as I mean speedily to see you.—Peace be with you !—All here salute you ; and the brethren, that are with you.

9. Commentators are divided in their opinions about Diotrephes. Many suppose, he was not a heretic ; but a member of the church, whose chief fault was the want of a proper humility of mind. But I think the apostle speaks in stronger terms against him, than is consistent with this supposition.

11. *He that doth good is of God* : that is, he who obeys the commandments of God, shews his belief in that God, who gave the commandment.

END OF THE THIRD EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

P R E F A C E.

T O T H E

E P I S T L E O F S T. J U D E.

ST. Jude is scarce mentioned in the evangelical history; except in the different catalogues of the apostles. He is among those, who are called the *brethren of our Lord*; by which expression some understand him to have been the son of Joseph, by a former wife; and others, a relation of Mary's. Eusebius * tells us, (from Hegesippus, a christian Jew, born in the beginning of the second century) that Domitian, in a fit of jealousy, ordering enquiry to be made after the posterity of David, some of the grand-children of St. Jude were brought before him. The emperor first asking them several questions about their profession, and manner of life, which was husbandry; inquired next about the kingdom of Christ? And when it should appear? To this they answered, That it was a spiritual, not a temporal kingdom; and that it should not be manifested, till the end of the world.—On this the emperor, finding they were mean persons, and their principles perfectly harmless, dismissed them.

The great intention of this epistle is to exhort christians to persevere in the faith—to avoid the wickedness of the times—and to be on their guard against deceivers.

* Lib, III. cap. iv.

GENERAL EPISTLE

O F

S T. J U D E.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

JUDE the servant of Christ, and brother of James, to all christians, however dispersed—mercy, peace, and love!

3. My chief purpose in this epistle, is to exhort you to persevere
4. steadily in the faith, which you have received; for many deceivers
are now abroad in the world (as it was prophesied there should
be) who denying the first principles of the christian faith, change
5. christian charity into worldly lusts. But I would wish to admonish
you, (tho you have been well instructed in these things) of the
terrible judgments of God against wickedness.—After the Israelites
had been delivered out of Egypt, you remember what wrath, and
6. destruction, attended their obstinate perverseness.—Even the an-
gels, who swerved from their allegiance to God, were not spared;
7. but are reserved for the judgment of the great day.—The ex-
-

4. Thus I should translate the words, *of old ordained to this condemnation.*

7. *Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*—that is, those cities were *for ever* destroyed. The apostle cannot well mean *future punishments*; because he mentions it as a *δειγμα*—something that was to be a *visible example* to all. That word (deriving from *δεικνυμαι* to *show* or *exhibit*) properly signifies to *give a sample of something to be sold.*

amples

amples of Sodom, and Gomorrah, and the cities around them—their vile lusts—and the punishment, they drew upon themselves, can never be forgotten.

And yet, you see, how the wickedness of these times prevails—
 what abominable uncleanness—what general corruption—what opposition to all government! Their very language discovers the pollution of their hearts. Even their traditional accounts, so much the object of their attention, in which the contest is related between Michael, and the devil about the body of Moses, give them very different instruction. There, tho the contention was so debasing the arch-angel treats his adversary even with gentleness: while they follow the examples of the very worst persons they find recorded in the bible-history—the malice of Cain—the covetousness, and seducing arts of Balaam—and the implacable opposition of Corah. A feast of charity they turn into wantonness. Like unwholesome air, they blast wherever they come. Like withered trees, they only incumber the ground. Like waves, they spend their rage only in foam. Like uncertain meteors, their light soon sets in darkness.—Against such persons Enoch prophesied, when speaking of the old world, he threatens them with God's heavy displeasure for their enormous crimes. Nor can those times furnish worse

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14. 15.

16.

9. We are under the necessity of making the best sense we can, of this very difficult passage, which has received so little elucidation from the hands of commentators.—They who do not like the supposition, that the apostle alludes to some traditional account of the angels burying the body of Moses, which the devil wished to have discovered, that the people might worship it, may suppose that he alludes to Zech. iii. 2, in which Joshua, the high priest, is represented standing before the angel of the Lord; and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him: to whom the angel said, The Lord rebuke thee. Joshua the high priest may stand for the Jewish people; which *the body of Moses* in this passage may also represent. It is a familiar mode of speaking; St. Paul calls christians the *body of Christ*.

12. The text says *twice dead*; the apostle may mean, that they were once wicked Jews, and having apostatized, are now wicked christians. Or perhaps he only expresses more strongly their deadness, as Virgil expressing happiness, says, ———terque, quaterque beati.

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examples,

examples, than these, of pride, uncleanness, and wickedness of every kind.

17. But do you, my brethren, always keep in mind, what you have
 18. 19. so often heard predicted; that at this time, deceivers should arise
 who should separate themselves from the church—relinquish all
 its blessings—and in the spirit of sensuality, follow their own
 20. 21. lusts.—You, in the mean time, being firmly established in the
 faith, and having a holy communication with God, through the
 Spirit, keep steadily obedient to the divine laws; and wait patiently
 for that blessed reward, which is promised to you through Christ.
22. 23. Treat the weak with gentleness—the stubborn, and obstinate
 with severity; having affection for their persons, while you abo-
 24. 25. minate their crimes. And may that gracious God, who created,
 and redeemed you, preserve you faultless to that great day! To
 him be glory, majesty, and dominion, for ever. Amen!

14. We have no account of any such prophecy; unless the apostle alludes to the name of his son *Methuselah*, which signifies, that *after his death, should succeed destruction*, that is the flood.

END OF THE EPISTLE BY ST. JUDE.

P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E V E L A T I O N O F S T. J O H N.

THE Revelation of St. John seems universally acknowledged to be a very authentic part of the sacred canon. It is mentioned as such by some of the earliest fathers; particularly by Ireneus, who lived in the second century, and was acquainted with Policarp, who had been the disciple of St. John himself.—After citing the authority of so early a father, it is needless to adduce the testimony of later writers—Clement, Tertullian, Origen, and others, who are yet full to the same purpose.

True it is, that, in after ages (probably as certain prophecies, those of Antichrist in particular, began to unfold themselves with a severer aspect) some learned men ventured to hesitate, and propose doubts. But on laying the whole of the evidence together, the deepest inquirers into this work, have professed themselves fully convinced of it's authenticity. At the head of these we may place the learned Joseph Mede, who is esteemed one of the ablest commentators on this mysterious book. He gives it plainly as his opinion, that the revelation of St. John depends on as indisputable authority, as that of any other book of the New Testament*.——Sir Isaac Newton, with equal confidence, in his observations on Daniel, hesitates not to make the very same assertion†.——To these testimonies we may add that of Dr. Lardner‡, who is second to none in learning, and

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REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THE Revelation of St. John seems universally acknowledged to be a very authentic part of the sacred canon. It is mentioned as such by some of the earliest fathers; particularly by Ireneus, who lived in the second century, and was acquainted with Policarp, who had been the disciple of St. John himself.—After citing the authority of so early a father, it is needless to adduce the testimony of later writers—Clement, Tertullian, Origen, and others, who are yet full to the same purpose.

True it is, that, in after ages (probably as certain prophecies, those of Antichrist in particular, began to unfold themselves with a severer aspect) some learned men ventured to hesitate, and propose doubts. But on laying the whole of the evidence together, the deepest inquirers into this work, have professed themselves fully convinced of its authenticity. At the head of these we may place the learned Joseph Mede, who is esteemed one of the ablest commentators on this mysterious book. He gives it plainly as his opinion, that the revelation of St. John depends on as indisputable authority, as that of any other book of the New Testament *.—Sir Isaac Newton, with equal confidence, in his observations on Daniel, hesitates not to make the very same assertion †.—To these testimonies we may add that of Dr. Lardner ‡, who is second to none in learning, and

* See his works, p. 602.

† p. 249.

‡ Hist. of the writers of the N. T. ch. 22.

accurate researches. This able inquirer hath fully collected all the evidence as it stands on both sides of the question; and on a review of the whole, expresses himself clearly satisfied of the authenticity of this book.

After fixing the authenticity of it, the next object of our inquiry is the intention of it. It is supposed to hold out the prophetic history of the church of Christ, to the latest period. Many interpreters conceive the visions it contains to be detached, and independent. Others suppose the whole texture of it to be wrought into one uniform, consistent plan. Among the latter is Mr. Mede, who divides it into three great parts.—The first part, he supposes, contains the epistles to the seven churches; and is not conceived by him to be of a prophetic nature. This part is comprized in the three first chapters.—The second part contains the visions of the *sealed book*; on the leaves of which the civil revolutions of the Roman empire, as they are connected with the church, are supposed to be portrayed in a kind of prophetic tablature. This part begins at the fourth chapter; and ends with the ninth.—The third part, which commences at the tenth chapter, is called the vision of the *open book*; and is delivered under an image, not unfrequent in the prophetic writers, of eating a book; which fills the prophet with the visions it contains. This part is supposed to hold forth the latter periods of the church; it's apostasy from the truth, and it's final restoration.—Yet tho' the plan of the whole is supposed by this learned writer to be consistent, and uniform; the prophecies contained under each vision, are not all conceived to be distinct. Many of them are thought to synchronize, or to relate to the same events. Thus the seventh seal is supposed to contain the seven trumpets; and the seventh trumpet to contain the seven vials.

Such is the plan of Mr. Mede. How far he, and other writers, who have followed, or deviated from his steps, have been successful in elucidating this very mysterious book, must still be left as matter of great uncertainty. The obscurity of the subject makes it easy to hazard an ingenious conjecture: and, no doubt many things have been said upon it, which have nothing better than ingenious conjecture to support them; especially in explaining the detail of each prophecy, in which perhaps many little circumstances, not essential to the main subject of it, are interpreted with a precision below the dignity of the prophet. How easily the

the wit of man may err. in *conjecturing* on this difficult subject, may be illustrated by a remarkable story, which bishop Burnet * tells of the learned bishop Lloyd of Worcester, who had employed twenty years of profound study on this mysterious book. In the year 1696, it seems the emperor concluded a peace with the Turks. On the occasion of this event, bishop Lloyd informed his friends, with great confidence, that this was the last war, in which the Turks should ever engage with the emperor; that their power was now abridged; and that he did not say this from conjecture; but founded it on the revelations of St. John.—How clearly he understood the revelations of St. John, may be known by consulting the annals of Europe since that period!

Prophecy was certainly not given us to *exercise the imagination*; but to *prove the truth*. When we pretend to be prophets ourselves, by predicting an event from the revelations, or any other prophetic part of scripture, *before* the completion of it, we may easily fall into the error of the good bishop. If a prophecy be not clearly compleated; if it be not almost like a mathematical demonstration, self-evident; if the wit of man be still necessary to unfold, and explain it; it is no proof. It wants itself to be proved. All the grand prophecies, on which the truth of christianity depends, have been thus clearly compleated. No candid person doubts the completion of those prophecies, which relate to the life, and death of the Messiah—to the call of the Gentiles—to the rejection of the Jews—and to the destruction of Jerusalem. On some particular prophecies hesitation may arise; but the whole together carries full conviction. But with regard to the apocalyptic prophecies, we have not that precision. They still want a full completion. Of this, the *various interpretations* of them, which are given to this day, are sufficient proof. The characters of Antichrist indeed are so strongly marked, and have been so *generally acknowledged*, through all the reformed parts of Europe, as the chief ground of their defection from Rome, that we run little risk, I think, in applying them to the Romish church. These marks indeed are furnished not only by St. John; but also by St. Paul, in his delineation of the *man of sin*.—Equally pointed is the pro-

* See his Hist. of his own time, V. II. p. 204.

phesy of the whore of Babylon *. The value of the argument, on this subject, may, in a degree be ascertained from the course of it. The protestants first took it up; and applied the character of the whore of Babylon to papal Rome. The marks of the *beast* were so strong, that the papists themselves, in part, acknowledged them; that is, they have generally allowed, that the city of Rome was figured out by Babylon: but they have endeavoured to prove, that it was *imperial*, not *papal* Rome; which the prophet meant to delineate. The evasion is awkward; both because the marks do not correspond with imperial Rome; and because they were never affixed to it, till after the protestants had first applied them to the papacy.

After all, however, I know not that we have any right in charity, to *determine absolutely*, that the whore of Babylon is the church of Rome, till we see that church reduced to the low condition of the apocalyptic whore. There is no occasion, it is true, to suppose her fall to be instantaneous; but gradual: and she hath no doubt, in a great degree fallen from her imperial dignity: yet still, while she continues to exist—especially in that splendor, which at present she maintains, we should interpret these mysterious characters with caution. Till *Babylon is fallen*, the prophecy is *not completely fulfilled*.

In the mean time, tho we cannot understand all the mysterious parts of this singular book; yet (it's divine authority being safe) we take it into our hands with the utmost reverence; and consider it as a deposit for the confirmation of the faith of future ages. It is to us precisely what the prophecies of the Old Testament were to the Jews. Those prophecies administered to them, the hope of the Messiah. The pious Jew looked into those holy books, as Simeon did, for the *consolation of Israel*. We, in the same manner, look up to these prophecies of the apocalypse for the full consummation of the great scheme of the gospel; when christianity shall finally prevail over all the corruptions of the world; and be universally established in it's utmost purity.

* The reader may see the sum of what has been written on this subject, well explained, and brought to a point, in bishop Hurd's lectures, preached at Lincoln's inn.

But besides the prophetic character of this book, it is, in other respects, of a very singular construction. No writings perhaps ever exhibited so great a variety of sublime ideas; and such astonishing grandeur of divine imagery. So that, if we consider the revelation of St. John only as a poetical description of the celestial regions; and the dispensations of God; it is a very delightful, and interesting composition. The glories of heaven in the fourth chapter; the picture of death in the sixth; together with the consummation of all things; and the terrors of the wicked, are grand representations. How sublime is the idea, in the seventh chapter, of the angels restraining the winds?—How nobly are the angels introduced in the eighth, with the seven trumpets; and with what poetical imagery does the smoke of the incense carry up the prayers of the saints before the throne of God?—The sounding of the fourth trumpet is very grand; and the flight of the angel through the copes of heaven, denouncing woe upon the earth.—The ascent of the locusts in the smoke of the bottomless pit; the description of them; and the sounding of their wings in their flight, are all circumstances highly poetical: as are also the loosing the four angels from the banks of Euphrates, on the sounding of the sixth trumpet; the description of the angel with the open book at the beginning of the tenth chapter; the reaping of the earth in the middle of the fourteenth; the grand scene in the fifteenth, on sending out the seven angels with vials; and the pouring out particularly of the last of them.—After these splendid passages follows that noble scene in the eighteenth chapter, in which the fall of Babylon is described; and the pathetic lamentations made over her, by the kings, and merchants of the earth.—The seventeenth and eighteenth verses of the nineteenth chapter are wonderfully sublime; in which an angel standing in the sun is represented calling the birds of prey to the banquet of the Lord, as the host of heaven is led out to battle.—The sealing up of the dragon; and the general judgment in the twentieth chapter; and the descent of the New Jerusalem in the twenty-first, close these sublime passages with equal grandeur.

The generality of these visions, as hath been observed, are represented under the idea of pictures, portrayed on the leaves of a book. The prophet therefore employs picturesque, as well as poetical imagery;

and hath marked the various figures he hath introduced, with such a glow of colouring, and strength of expression, as plainly shew, how much his imagination was fired with the original.

The mysterious parts of this wonderful book, I have not attempted to explain, contenting myself merely with illustrating the narrative. Here too I have been more cautious in modernizing, than in the gospels, and epistles. As I endeavoured there to *explain*, I was obliged often to give up the dignity, and simplicity of the expression, for the sake of making the narrative, or the doctrine, more easy. But here, as I have made no attempts of that kind, I have left the text more pure; and more in possession of those bold, eastern modes of speaking, which add so much to it's grandeur.

REVELATION

OF

S T. J O H N.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

THE following is a revelation from God, through Christ, concerning things relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, which shall soon be accomplished.

This revelation God gave to his servant John; who had already borne testimony to the truth. Happy are they, whom it concerns, if they attend obediently to the prophecies contained in it; the completion of which approaches.

John to the seven churches of Asia, grace, and peace from the eternal, immutable God; from the Holy Ghost; and from Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead, and is now exalted to infinite glory!—To him, who hath redeemed us with his blood; and given us access to the Father, be glory and dominion for ever, and

1. The expression, *which must shortly come to pass*, need not be supposed to denote any immediate completion; but to be spoken in the language of heaven, in which a thousand years are as one day.

6. 7. These verses seem to be a sort of analysis of what is contained in the book—that is, the full conclusion of the christian dispensation. They seem to contain the great moral of the whole.

7. ever; Amen!—I see him coming in the clouds of heaven! every eye shall see him—his murderers shall acknowledge his power—all the tribes of the earth shall mourn before him. Amen. Amen!
8. —Thus he proclaims his glorious approach. I AM THE FIRST, AND THE LAST—THE BEGINNING, AND THE END—WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME—THE ETERNAL, ALMIGHTY GOD.

9. I John, the companion of your afflictions, and the partaker of your hope in Christ, was in the island of Patmos, where I had
10. been banished on the account of the faith: and being earnestly engaged on the Lord's day, in meditation and prayer; I heard a voice behind me, loud as a trumpet, saying; I am the beginning, and
11. the end—the first and the last. Write what thou seest in a book; and send it to the churches of Asia; Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
12. Surprized at this wonderful voice, I turned round to see from whence it issued; and saw seven golden candlesticks hanging in
13. circular order; and in the midst of them an awful figure, like the Son of man. He was clothed in a long robe, girt round him
14. 15. 16. with a golden girdle. His hair was white as snow; his countenance like the sun shining in his strength; his eyes like a flame of fire; and his voice founded like the fall of waters. From his mouth a

9. Patmos was one of the Cyclades in the Egean sea, where St. John was banished, according to Ireneaus, about the year 96.

11. If you inspect a map of Asia Minor, you will find these churches lie in a circular order; so that if you begin at Ephesus, you may visit them all in the rotation marked by the apostle; which was probably the course of his visitation.

12. The seven candlesticks allude to the golden lamp with its branches in the temple of Jerusalem. Throughout this book indeed there is a constant allusion to the ceremonies, and ritual of the Jewish worship.

sharp two-edged sword seemed to issue. In his right hand he held seven stars; and his feet appeared like brass, glowing in a furnace.

At the sight of such an awful figure I was unable to speak, and fell down at his feet. He laid his hand gently upon me, and said, "Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he also who died; and rose again; and now live for ever; and hold the keys of everlasting life. Write what thou hast seen. This vision relates to present, and future times. The seven candlesticks represent seven churches; and the seven stars, the ministers of those churches."

To the church of Ephesus, and it's ministers write;—Thus saith he, who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand; and standeth in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: I know thy virtuous deeds; thy patience in affliction; thy abhorrence of wickedness, thy caution against falshood. Yet I have a matter against thee. Thy ancient zeal, and love for the truth, are in part gone off. Repent of this luke-warmness. Recover thy old affections; or I will come suddenly, and remove thy candlestick.—Yet thou hatest the Nicolaitanes, whom I also hate.—Let him who hath ears to hear, remember what is said to the churches. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall eat of the tree of life, in the paradise of God.

To the church of Smyrna, and it's ministers, write;—Thus saith the first, and the last; he who was dead, and is alive. I know thy works; thy distresses, and sufferings for religion. God will repay thee. I know also the blasphemy of false brethren; and their persecution of thee. But fear them not: fear not the afflictions, which thou hast yet to suffer for the space of ten days. Be faithful

C H A P.

II.

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10. Those commentators, who suppose, that these epistles to the seven churches of Asia, relate to the church of Christ as divided into seven periods, consider the church of Smyrna as representing the church of Christ in it's persecuted state; making the ten days relate to the ten general persecutions.

11. unto death ; and I will give thee a crown of life.—Let him who hath ears to hear, remember what is said to the churches. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall not die eternally.

12. To the church of Pergamos, and it's ministers, write thus ;—These
13. things saith he, from whose mouth issues a two-edged sword. I know thy works, and thy habitation among those, who oppose the truth : and that thou hast still holden fast thy profession ; particularly
14. in the days of Antipas, my faithful martyr. But I have yet against thee thy connection with those, who practise the wickedness of Balaam ; who lay the stumbling block of delusion before their brethren ; who eat things sacrificed to idols, and commit fornication.
15. Such are those of the Nicolaitane heresy. Repent therefore of these
16. wicked connections ; or thou shalt be consumed with the sword,
17. that issueth from my mouth.—Let him who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall be fed with the manna of heaven. He shall receive a tablet, inscribed with that secret name, which shall intitle him to everlasting life.

18. To the church of Thyatira, and it's ministers, write ;—Thus saith
19. he, whose eyes are like a flame of fire ; and whose feet are like glowing bras. I know thy righteous deeds ; thy faith ; thy services,
20. and thy increase in good works. But I have somewhat against thee, in that thou suffereſt thy people to be deluded by the witchcrafts of
21. Jezebel ; and to tread in her idolatrous steps. I have given them
22. time to repent. If they continue obstinate, I will bring my last afflictions upon those, who delude ; and upon those, who are
23. deluded ; and I will cut off their posterity ; and all the churches shall know, that my judgments search deep ; and that I will reward,

17. The *white stone* inscribed, alludes to the custom of passing judgments, making elections, &c. by white, and black stones.

and punish men according to their works. As for those, who
 abhor these delusions, I will leave on them such burthens only, as
 their profession lays upon them. Hold fast the faith till I come.
 He that resisteth the temptations of the world, and persevereth to
 the end, shall rule over the nations; and his spiritual rod shall
 break in pieces the idolatry of the land, as a potter's vessel is broken :
 and I will give him the brightness, and glory of the morning star.—
 Let him, who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the
 churches.

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C H A P.

III.

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To the church of Sardis, and it's ministers, write thus ;—These
 things saith he, who holdeth the seven stars, and with whom are
 the seven spirits of God. I know thy deeds, and the name thou
 holdest among the churches. But thy religion is dead. Rouse
 thyself, and awake it's holy flame in thy breast. Thy works are
 not perfect in the sight of God. Remember the early instructions
 of thy youth. Hold them fast in thy memory ; and repent of thy
 sins. If not, I will come upon thee suddenly to destroy thee. A
 few I have yet in Sardis ; holy, and undefiled. These, and all
 that resist the temptations of the world, shall stand before me in
 white garments. Their names shall not be blotted from the book
 of life ; and I will present them to the Father before all his holy
 angels.—Let him, who hath an ear to hear, remember what
 is said to the churches.

To the church of Philadelphia, and it's ministers, write thus ;—
 These things saith the Holy One. He who hath the key of David.
 He who openeth, and none can shut : He who shutteth, and none
 can open. I know thy works. I have opened the door before
 thee ; and none can shut it. Thou hast kept my word. Thou

7. Alluding to Isa. xxii. 22.

8. St. Paul often uses the same image 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12 ; and again Col. iv. 3.

10. haſt not denied my name. The apoſtate Jew ſhall bow before
 11. thee; and ſhall hereafter acknowledge thee to be the favorite of
 12. heaven. Becauſe thou haſt patiently kept my word, I will preſerve
 thee from thoſe trials, which are coming on the earth. Behold I
 will come quickly. Keep thine integrity. Let no man deprive
 thee of thy crown. He who reſiſteth the temptations of the world,
 ſhall be a pillar in the temple of God. It ſhall ſtand immoveable.
 On it ſhall be inſcribed the name of God; the name alſo of the
 city of God, the new Jeruſalem; and on it ſhall be inſcribed my
 own new name.—Let him, who hath an ear to hear, remember
 what is ſaid to the churches.

14. To the church of Laodicea, and it's miniſters, write thus;—
 15. Theſe things ſaith the truth; the Lord of the creation. I know
 16. thy works; thy profeſſions; and thy hypocrify. O that thou
 wert either a thorough gentile, or a thorough chriſtian! Thou
 art neither; and I reject thee. In the miſt of all thy profeſſions,
 thou art poor, and wretched. Purchase thy gold of me; and thou
 ſhalt be rich. Cloath thyſelf with the white raiment, that I ſhall
 give thee; and thy nakedneſs ſhall be hid. Anoint thine eyes with
 19. the ointment of truth; and thou ſhalt ſee. Whom I love, I reprove.
 20. Be zealous, and repent. Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock.
 21. If any one heareth my voice, and openeth; I enter, and abide with
 him. He who reſiſteth the temptations of the world, ſhall ſit
 with me on my throne, as I ſit with my Father on his throne.—
 22. Let him, who hath an ear to hear, remember what is ſaid to the
 churches†.

15. The word *αργον* is uſed in this ſenſe in Eph. iii. 10—and Col. i. 16.

† Theſe epiſtles to the churches are ſuppoſed to represent the things that *now are* (ſee chap. i. 19) or the ſtate of religion in thoſe churches, at the time the apoſtle wrote.

After this first vision I had a second. I saw the doors of heaven thrown open; and heard a voice like the sound of a trumpet, calling to me; Come up hither; and I will shew thee what shall come to pass.

C H A P.
IV.
1.

Immediately I was transported into heaven, and saw a glorious form, sitting on a throne. The throne was circled by a varied light, like a rainbow, which emitted from every part, splendid rays, like lightning; while awful sounds of speaking thunder proclaimed aloud the majesty of the appearance. Around the throne sat four and twenty elders, clothed in white garments, with crowns of gold upon their heads: and before it hung seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. The space around it, had the appearance of a sea of crystal.

2. 3.

4. 5.

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As I viewed the throne more attentively, I saw it was ornamented with four animal forms; all endowed with life. The first had the resemblance of a lion; the second, of an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth the appearance of an eagle. Each

7.

1. This second vision represents *the things, which shall be hereafter*. (See chap. i. 19) The *door in heaven*, and the trumpet, allude to the opening of the gates of the temple, and calling the Levites to their office.

6. The sea of glass is an image taken from the brazen laver in Solomon's temple.

6. I think the words in the original, *ἐν μέσῳ τῆ θρόνου, καὶ κυκλῶ τῆ θρόνου* will bear this sense. But I am the more diffident, as I have no where met with it. But it certainly adds much to the dignity of the throne, to suppose, that it's very ornaments are living forms; and have their appointed services. But chiefly it takes from the grossness of the idea in supposing four beasts mixed with the four and twenty elders.

7. Mr. Mede discovers from the Jewish rabbins, that these four beasts were the four ensigns of Israel, when the twelve tribes were marshalled into four companies. Judah led the first, under the standard of a lion; Ephraim the second, under that of an ox; Reuben the third, under a man; and Dan the fourth, under an eagle.—Others think there is no foundation for this (see Mr. Lowman) but that they rather have allusion to the cherubims in the temple.—Others again suppose, they represented the various gifts, with which God endows his ministers. One has more fortitude; a second more gentleness; a third more wisdom; and a fourth more penetration.—It is plain they allude to the vision of Ezekiel i. 10.

8. was covered with six wings; and was full of eyes in every part; and all together joined in a chorus of praise to God; Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; who was; and is; and is to come.

9. Immediately on this chorus of praise from the several parts of
10. the throne, the four and twenty elders arose from their seats; and
11. prostrated themselves before him, that sat on the throne, casting their crowns before him, and saying, Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created
CHAP. all things; and through thy power they are all preserved.
V.

I then saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, a book
1. 2. sealed with seven seals: and I heard an angel ask with a loud voice,
3. 4. Who is able to open the book? But no one appeared. Then I
5. wept. On this one of the elders said, Weep not, behold the Lion
6. of the house of Judah shall loose the seals, and open the book.—And as I looked, behold a lamb stood before the throne, pierced, and bloody, as if it had been slaughtered. It had seven horns, and seven eyes; which are the seven spirits of God, sent out to minister
7. 8. on the earth. He then took the book; and as he took it the living forms, which incircled the throne; and the elders having harps in their hands, and golden vials, full of perfumes, which are the
9. prayers of saints, fell down before the Lamb; praising, and singing; Worthy art thou to open the seals; for thou hast redeemed all
10. the nations of the earth by thy blood; and given us the blessings
11. of thy favoured people.—This chorus was joined by myriads
12. of angels, singing, Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive

1. This book Mr. Mede calls the *codex fatidicus*—the book of the counsels of God. It is sealed with seven seals to shew that it's contents are secret.

5. Christ is called the *Lion of the house of Judah*, in allusion to Jacob's prophecy. Gen. xlix. 9.

6. *Horns*, and *eyes* are the usual symbols of power, and wisdom.

8. The vials were a sort of censers, in allusion to the censers used in the temple-service.

power, and honour, and glory.—And this again was joined by
 the whole animate creation, crying, Honour, glory, and power
 be unto Him that sitteth on the throne; and to the Lamb for ever
 and ever.—Then the four living forms, that circled the throne,
 cried, Amen; while the four and twenty elders fell down, and
 worshipped him, that liveth for ever.

Then the Lamb opened one of the seals; and one of the living
 forms, that circled the throne, cried with a loud voice, Come and
 see. On this, I saw portrayed in the book, a white horse, and he
 that rode upon him, had a crown on his head, and a bow in his
 hand; and he went out to conquer.—He then opened the second
 seal; when another of the living forms that circled the throne,
 called to me in like manner, Come, and see. Then I saw portrayed
 a red horse; and he that rode him, appeared brandishing a sword;
 and frightened peace from the earth.—He then opened the third
 seal; and another of the living forms called to me again. I then
 saw on the open page a black horse; and he, who rode him had
 a balance in his hand. And I heard a voice from the living forms
 around the throne, A measure of wheat for a penny—but see
 that thou injure not the oil, and the wine.—He then opened
 the fourth seal; and I was again called, as before: when I beheld
 a pale horse; and he that sat on him was Death. Destruction
 followed hard behind; and power was given him to destroy a fourth
 part of the earth.—The fifth seal was then opened. In that
 page I saw an altar portrayed, and under it the souls of those,
 who had suffered death in testimony to the truth; and they cried,
 Holy Lord God, when wilt thou call us, and our enemies before

CHAP.
VI.

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6. *A measure of wheat for a penny.* This seems meant to describe a time of great scarcity. A penny was about 7d. of our money; and was the price of a day's labour. And the measure here spoken of, is supposed to be a slave's allowance for a day. The scarcity therefore must be great, when a man's labour could merely supply himself with food, and that only bread.

11. thee in judgment? Then white robes were given them; and they were ordered to rest, till the number of their brethren was compleated.—After this, the sixth seal was opened: and I saw the
12. earth rent as by an earthquake. The sun was darkened; and the
13. moon red as blood. The stars dropped from heaven, like the
14. decayed fruit of a fig-tree. The heavens were rolled up like a
15. scroll of parchment. The earth was rent; and all the inhabitants
16. in dismay, hid themselves in caverns, calling to the rocks and mountains to cover them, and preserve them from the wrath of
17. Him, that sat on the throne; and from the Lamb; the day of whose irresistible displeasure was now fully come. And as I looked,
- C H A P. VII.
1. 2. I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth; and restraining the four winds, that they might not rage against it. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, with the seal of God in his hand; and he cried to the four angels; Hurt not
3. 4. 5. 6. 7. the earth, nor any thing in it, till we have sealed the servants of
8. 9. God. And there were sealed one hundred and forty-four thousand from the twelve tribes of Israel; twelve thousand from each tribe. After this I saw an innumerable multitude of people gathered from
10. all nations standing before the throne, and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes, and held palm-branches in their hands; and joined in a song of praise, Salvation be ascribed to
11. God, who sitteth upon the throne; and likewise to the Lamb. And all the company of heaven joined them, falling on their faces
12. before the throne; and worshipping God saying, Amen! Glory, thanksgiving, and honour be ascribed to God for ever, and ever, Amen! Then one of the elders asked me, if I knew who they
13. were, that were thus clothed in white? I desired him to inform
14. me. They are such, said he, as have been purified by affliction; and have washed their robes, and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb. Now they are advanced to the presence of God; and
15. serve

serve him day, and night; and enjoy his divine communication. They are now removed from all their afflictions. All tears are wiped from their eyes; and they shall drink of the fountain of living water.——After this, the seventh seal was opened: and there was silence in heaven for half an hour. Then seven angels stood before God, into whose hands were put seven trumpets. And I saw a golden altar standing before the throne; at which stood another angel, with a golden censer in his hand; into which he put incense, that he might present it on the golden altar, together with the prayers of the saints; which were carried up, in the smoke of the incense, to the throne of God. The angel then filled the censer with fire from the altar, and scattered it over the earth. Thunders, and lightnings followed, and a great earthquake. Then the seven angels, who held the trumpets, prepared to sound.

The first angel sounded; and a storm of hail, and fire, mingled with blood, fell on the earth, and destroyed a third part of it's fruits.——The second angel sounded; and I saw a vast ball of fire, like a burning mountain, thrown into the sea; and it changed a third part of it's waters into blood; and destroyed a third part of the ships, and a third part of the inhabitants of the deep.——The third angel sounded; and I saw a flaming star, like a torch, fall on the third part of the rivers, and fountains. It poisoned all the fish; and destroyed all, who drank of the waters.——On the sounding of the fourth angel, a third part of the sun was darkened; a third of the moon, and a third of the stars. Night and day lost each a third of it's light. And I

16.

17.

C H A P.
VIII.

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1. *The silence in heaven* is an allusion to a beautiful custom in the Jewish worship. When the priest went into the temple to burn incense, all the instruments, which united in grand chorus before, made a solemn pause. During this interval the priest offered up his propitiatory devotion within the temple; while the people stood praying in silence without.

C H A P.

IX.

1.

saw an angel flying through the copes of heaven, and crying three times, with a loud voice, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the wrath, that is preparing against them!—Then the fifth trumpet sounded; and I saw an angel falling, like a

2.

bright star from heaven, in his hand he bore a key, with which he opened the bottomless pit; and the smoke burst forth, like

3-12.

the smoke of a furnace; and darkened the light of heaven. In the smoke ascended locusts innumerable: and as they ascended, they changed their forms, and like horses prepared for war, became covered with mail. They had human faces with dishevelled hair, and teeth like lions; they had crowns on their heads, and seemed as if they wore breast-plates of iron. They

had tails like scorpions full of deadly stings. They followed a leader, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is Apollyon; and when they moved, the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, or of horses rushing to battle. But

they had power to hurt only those, who had not the seal of God upon them. They had not power to kill; but only to torment: and this power was limited to the space of five months. And to avoid the torments they inflicted, men

13.

wished for death; but could not find it.—After this, the sixth angel sounded his trumpet; and I heard a voice from the

14.

golden altar, that stood before the throne of God, crying, Loose the four angels, who are bound near the river Euphrates. And

15.

the angels were loosed; and allowed for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, to destroy a third part of the human race. And

16.

their armies were myriads of myriads. They wore breast plates of fire; and rode on horses fierce and terrible, which breathed

17.

flame from their nostrils. They had tails like serpents; and they destroyed a third part of the human race. Yet still the

18. 19.

20. 21.

C H A P.

X.

1.

remainder of the sons of men repented not of their idolatries, and their crimes. After this an angel descended from heaven, inthroned

enthroned in a resplendent cloud. His countenance shone like the sun. His feet were like pillars of fire; and a bright rainbow circled his head. He held a small open book in his hand; and set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth. Then he cried with a very loud voice; which was answered with thunder. I was preparing to write what I heard; when I was ordered to seal up what the thunder had spoken; and not to write it. Then the angel that stood upon the sea, and on the earth, lifting up his hand, to heaven, swore by the almighty Creator of all things, that time should be no more; and that after the seventh angel had sounded, the mystery of God should be finished, as he had declared by his servants. I was then ordered to take the small book that was in the hand of the angel, and to eat it. It would be sweet, I was told, to the palate; but bitter to the stomach. I did accordingly, and felt, as had been described. Then said the angel to me, Thou must prophesy before people, and nations, and kings. A measuring-rod was also put into my hand; and the angel said, Measure the temple of God; measure the altar, and number the worshippers. But measure not the outward court: for it belongeth to the gentiles. And they shall trample on the holy city forty and two months. And my two witnesses, clothed in sack-cloth, shall be appointed to prophesy a thousand, two hundred, and sixty

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C H A P.

XI.

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9. Alluding to Ezek. ii. 8—and iii. 33. Eating a book, in the prophetic language, signifies reading it, and meditating on it. It was *sweet* to receive a revelation from God; but as it contained his judgments against the wicked, it was attended with *bitterness*.

1. Alluding to Ezek. xl. 3.

3. There is great difficulty with regard to the two witnesses. The most probable interpretation, I think, is, that no two particular persons are signified, but all, who testified the truth, during this period: and the number too may be used in allusion to the two witnesses, which the law demanded. We observe, every where, in this book an allusion to Jewish customs.

days.

4. days. These are the two olive-trees; and the two candlesticks,
 5. that stand before God. The fire of their mouths shall destroy
 all, who oppose them. Even he, who but desireth to injure them,
 6. shall suffer. These witnesses have power to shut the heavens, so
 that no rain shall fall, during their prophecy. They have power
 7. to turn the sea into blood, and smite the earth with plagues. And
 when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that as-
 8. cendeth from the abyss, shall make war upon them; and over-
 come them. And their dead bodies shall fall in the streets of the
 great city, spiritually called Sodom, where Jesus was crucified.
 9. And various people of different nations shall see their dead bodies
 three days, and an half, and shall not suffer them to be buried.
 10. And the inhabitants of the earth shall triumph over them; and
 congratulate each other, on the death of those, who had roused
 11. them from the slumber of guilt. But after three days, and an
 half, they were restored to life; and great fear fell on all, who
 12. saw them. And a voice from heaven called to them, saying, Come
 up hither; and they ascended in a cloud, as their enemies stood
 13. beholding them. Then followed a dreadful earthquake, which
 overturned a tenth part of the city; and seven thousand men were
 destroyed. The rest were frightened into a dependence on God.
 14. 15. The second woe is past, the third woe approacheth.—Then the
 seventh angel sounded his trumpet; and various voices were heard
 in heaven, singing aloud, The kingdoms of the earth are be-
 come the kingdoms of heaven. The Lord shall reign, and his
 16. anointed, for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders,
 who sat before God, fell on their faces, and worshipped, saying,
 17. We give thee thanks, O Lord God, eternal, and almighty, who

4. Here is a plain allusion to Zachariah's vision (iv. 3, 11, 14).—By the fire which proceeded out of the mouth of the witnesses, seems to be meant their great power in preaching the word of God.

now appeareth in all thy power and glory. Now shall the earth be judged; now shall the wicked be punished; and thy righteous servants be rewarded. 13.

And I saw the temple of God; and the ark of the covenant standing in the temple: and I heard thunder, accompanied with lightning, and an earthquake, and various voices. And I saw a wonderful appearance—a woman, as it were, invested with the sun, and standing on the moon; having her head incircled by a crown, composed of twelve stars. And being with child, she cried out in travel. And I saw a fiery dragon, with seven heads, and ten horns. On each head he wore a crown; and with his tail he swept away a third part of the stars of heaven; and threw them to the ground. And he stood before the woman ready to devour the child, that should be brought forth. A male-child was born: and being destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron, it was caught up, and carried to the throne of God: while the woman fled into the wilderness, where a place of refuge was provided for her, during a thousand, two hundred, and sixty days. 19. CHAP. XII. 1.

Then followed war in heaven: Michael, and his angels fought against the fiery dragon; and prevailed over him; and his place in heaven was no longer found. The great dragon was cast out; called the devil, and Satan; who deceived the world; and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, crying out, Now is salvation come; the power, and authority of God; and the reign of Christ: for the accuser of the righteous before the throne of God, is now cast down. He is overcome by the blood of the Lamb; and the testimony of those, who have laid down their lives for the truth. Therefore rejoice, 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

5. Alluding to the prediction of Christ. Ps. ii. 9. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron.

ye heavens, and all that inhabit them. But woe to the world: for the devil is come down in great rage, knowing that his time is short.

13. Now when the dragon found that an end was put to his con-
 14. tention in heaven, he persecuted the woman upon earth. But
 the woman had wings given her; so she avoided his pursuit for a
 15. *time, and times, and half a time.* And when in his power he
 threw after her a violent stream of water, hoping to carry her
 16. away in the flood; the earth assisted the woman, and opening it's
 mouth, swallowed up the flood, before it reached the woman.
 17. Then the dragon being enraged gave up the pursuit; and made
 war upon the seed of the woman; that is, upon all, who keep
 the commandments of God, and bear testimony to Christ.

CHAP.
XIII.

1. And as I stood upon the shore, I saw a beast arise out of the
 sea, with seven heads, and ten horns. And on each horn was
 a crown; and on each head some blasphemous name was written.
 2. In form he was like a leopard; but his feet were like the feet of
 a bear; and his mouth like that of a lion. To him the dragon
 3. gave up all his power, and authority. And as I looked, one of
 his heads appeared to be greatly wounded; but this wound was
 4. healed.—Then all the earth revered the beast; worshipping both
 him, and the dragon, from whom he received his power; saying,
 Who is equal to the beast? Who is able to contend with him?—
 5. 6. 7. And he was permitted to speak blasphemy against God; and to
 make war upon his saints for the space of forty years, and two
 8. months. So that all the world went after him; except those,
 whose names were written in the book of life by the Lamb, which
 9. was slain from the foundation of the world. And now let all men
 10. attend. A conclusion shall soon be put to this violence, and ini-
 quity; and the faith, and patience of the saints shall finally pre-
 vail.

Then

Then I saw another beast arise out of the earth; which had the horns of a lamb; but the violence of a dragon. He seemed, as it were, to exercise authority under the first beast; whose wound was healed; and whom he obliged all the inhabitants of the earth to worship. And he made pretences to great signs, and wonders; calling fire from heaven in the sight of men. He obliged also the inhabitants of the earth to make an image of the beast; and was permitted to give life to it. He set it up also to be worshipped; and he made all his worshippers to receive a mark on their right-hand, and on their foreheads—the name of the beast, and his number; without which no man was permitted to buy, or sell. It is a matter of wisdom and understanding to compute the number of the beast; and it is to be computed in an human manner. The number is six hundred and sixty-six.

And I beheld a Lamb standing on mount Sion; and around him stood one hundred and forty-four thousand people; all of whom had the name of God written on their foreheads. And I heard voices from heaven loud as thunder; yet sweet as the sound of falling waters, accompanied with instruments of music. And they sang

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C H A P.
XIV.
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18. It was common in the eastern languages to express things by enigmatical numbers. We have here a celebrated instance of this mode of expression in the *number of the beast*; which hath given occasion to a great variety of calculations, and explanations. In the Greek language this number is found in the numerical letters of the word LATEINOS; which the protestant does not scruple to affix on the Roman church; as it *latinizes* in every thing—in its prayers, bulls, decretals, and use of scripture: and the authority of Irenæus, who lived in the first century, is given for this explication; tho in fact Irenæus is not satisfied with his own explication, but mentions it only as a conjecture. Others have found the same numerical letters in other names. A late writer, finding it to his purpose to make the French king, instead of the pope, the apocalyptic beast, finds them in the word LVDOVICVS. See Vivian's Explic. of the Rev.

Others again do not look for the enigmatical number in a name; but consider it as a date; and computing from the vision, find six hundred and sixty-six years nearly about the time of investing the bishop of Rome with temporal power.

4. before the throne of God ; but none could join them, except the
 5. one hundred and forty-four thousand, who had been redeemed from
 the earth. These are they, who have never been seduced into
 idolatry ; but have followed the Lamb. In them no guile hath
 been found : they are blameless in the sight of God.

6. And I saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven, having
 the everlasting gospel in his hand ; which was open to every nation ;
 7. and he cried with a loud voice, Fear God, and glorify his name ;
 for the time of judgment is come. Worship Him, that made
 heaven, and earth, and all therein.

8. And another angel followed, crying, Babylon the great is fallen—
 9. is fallen ; because she made the nations of the earth drunk with
 the wine of her fornications.

10. And a third angel followed crying, If any one worship the beast,
 or receive his mark, he shall drink of the wine of God's indignation,
 poured without mixture from the cup of his wrath : and he shall
 11. be tormented with fire : and the smoke of his torment shall ascend
 for ever ; and he shall neither have rest by day, nor by night.

12. Then shall follow the happy rest of the saints ; those, who have
 13. kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Christ. And I
 heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, blessed are the dead,
 who die in the Lord. Now, faith the Spirit, they rest from their
 labours ; and meet the reward of their works.

14. And I saw an angel sitting in a white cloud, with a golden crown
 15. on his head ; and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel
 came out of the temple, crying to him, Put in thy sickle, and
 16. reap : for the time is come—the harvest of the earth is ripe.—Then
 he, who sat upon the cloud, put in his sickle ; and the earth was
 reaped.

8. Alluding to Isaiah xxi. 9.

And another angel, with a sickle in his hand, flew from the temple, and a fourth angel that came from the altar, called to him, and said, Put in thy sickle, and gather the grapes of the earth; for they are ripe.—And the angel put forth his sickle, and gathered the grapes of the earth; and threw them into the wine-press of the wrath of God: and the wine-press was trodden; and the blood reached even to the horses' bridles; through the space of a thousand six hundred furlongs.

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And I saw another wonderful appearance in heaven—seven angels, having the seven last plagues, which finished the wrath of God on the wickedness of man.—A vast plain was stretched before the eye, which had the appearance of molten glass; and on it were assembled all those, who had gained a victory over the beast; and had escaped the pollutions of the world. With harps in their hands, they celebrated the praises of God; and sang the song of Moses, the servant of the Lord; and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great, and glorious are thy works, O Lord almighty. Just, and true are all thy ways, O king of saints. Let the whole earth, O Lord, glorify thy name: for thou only art holy. Let all the nations of the earth glorify thee: for thy righteous judgments are manifest to all.

C H A P.
XV.

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After this hymn of praise, the Holy of Holies was thrown open, and seven angels came out of the temple, clothed in pure white, with golden girdles around their breasts. They had in their hands seven golden vials, filled with the wrath of God. In the meantime the glory of the Lord, screened in dark clouds, took possession of the temple, so that no one could enter it, till the vials were poured out. Then I heard a voice from the temple, calling to the angels to pour out their vials.

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C H A P.
XVI.

1.

20. This bold image seems to express great slaughter.—But Bowyer conjectures, that instead of *χαλινων*, the true reading should be *χρῆλων*; the blood came up to the hoofs of the horses.

2. The first angel poured out his vial over the earth; and a grievous ulcer was inflicted on all, that had the mark of the beast.—The
 3. second angel poured out his vial on the sea; and it's waters became
 4. blood; and all it's inhabitants died.—The third angel poured out
 5. his vial over the rivers, and fountains; and they also became blood.
 6. And as he emptied his vial, he cried, Righteous art thou, O Lord,
 7. who hast ordered all these things in judgment. They have shed
 8. the blood of thy saints; and thou hast given them blood to drink.
 9. And I heard another angel cry from the altar, True and just, O
 10. Lord, are all thy judgments.—The fourth angel poured out his
 11. vial on the sun; and it's burning heat scorched the inhabitants of
 12. the earth; and they blasphemed the name of God: but they were
 13. not led by these plagues to repentance.—The fifth angel poured
 14. out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was
 15. darkened; and horrible pain seized it's inhabitants; and they
 16. wreathed themselves in their misery, and blasphemed God; but
 17. repented not of their sins.—The sixth angel poured out his vial
 18. upon the river Euphrates: and it's waters were dried up; and a way
 was opened for the kings of the east. And I saw seven unclean
 spirits, like frogs, issue from the mouth of the dragon, and from
 the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophets.
 They are the spirits of demons, working lying miracles, to bring
 the kings of the earth together to the battle of the great day of
 God Almighty. Behold, saith the Lord, I come suddenly. Blessed
 is he, that keepeth himself from the pollutions of the world. Then
 the armies of the earth were gathered together at Armagiddon.—The
 last angel poured out his vial into the air: and I heard a voice from
 the temple, and throne of God, crying, It is finished. Then fol-

12. It is supposed by some interpreters, that the vials allude to the same periods, as the trumpets. On the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the angels were loosed from the Euphrates. On the pouring out of the sixth vial, the Euphrates is dried up.

lowed voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake, such as had never been known, since the creation of the world. And the great city of Babylon was rent in three parts; and drank fully of the cup of the wrath of God. The mountains disappeared from the land; and the islands from the sea; and hail-stones of a talent weight, were poured from heaven upon mankind: yet still their wickedness continued, and they blasphemed the holy God.

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C H A P.
XVII.

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And one of the seven angels, which poured out the vials, said unto me, Come hither, and I will shew thee what judgments shall be passed on the great harlot, who sitteth on many waters; who hath committed whoredom with the kings of the earth; and hath intoxicated the nations with the wine of pollution. And he transported me in the spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast, inscribed all over with blasphemous names; having seven heads, and ten horns. She was arrayed in scarlet, and purple; and adorned with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; and held a golden cup in her hand, filled with the abomination of her corruptions. On her forehead was inscribed, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth*: and she was drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs.

I was astonished at the sight, and the angel asked me, Why I wondered? I will explain to thee, said he, the mystery of the woman; and of the beast, that carries her, which hath seven heads, and ten horns. The beast thou sawest, was; and is not. It ascended from the bottomless pit; and shall descend into it again: and the inhabitants of the earth, whose names are not written in

3. Whoever has seen the pope, and cardinals ride on mules, covered almost over with scarlet-cloth, cannot but be put in mind of the woman riding on a scarlet-coloured beast.—Not that I suppose the prophet alludes to so trifling a circumstance; in which there is in fact no immorality: yet the thing is singular.

9. the book of life, shall gaze after it, and wonder.—But now attend
 10. to the real meaning. The seven heads are seven mountains; on
 11. which the woman sitteth. There are also seven governments. Five
 12. are abolished—one is,—another is not yet come; and when it cometh,
 13. 14. it shall continue but a short time. The beast is the eighth; and
 yet he was also one of the seven; and shall go into perdition. And
 the ten horns, which thou sawest, are ten kings. They have
 received no kingdom as yet; but receive the power of kings, one
 15. hour, with the beast. They have all but one mind; and shall unite
 16. in strengthening the beast, making war upon the Lamb.—But the
 17. Lamb shall overcome them: his power is above all; and his fol-
 18. lowers are chosen and faithful. The waters, which thou sawest,
 where the whore sitteth, are people, and nations: and the ten
 horns of the beast shall attack the whore, and destroy her. For
 God hath put into their hearts to fulfill his will; so they shall
 strengthen the beast, only till the time, which God hath appointed.
 The woman, which thou sawest, represents that great city, which
 reigneth over the kings of the earth.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1. 2. 3.

After this, I saw another angel come down from heaven with great power. The whole earth was enlightened with the splendor of his presence. And he cried with a loud voice, Babylon the great is fallen—is fallen. She who had power to intoxicate the

10. *They are seven kings. Five are fallen.* These five species of government, which are fallen, are supposed to be *kings, consuls, dictators, decemvire, and military tribunes*. How far interpreters may be right in this solution, is not easy to say: certain however it is, that both Livy, and Tacitus enumerate the different modes of Roman government, that prevailed before the emperors, exactly in this manner.—*Romani sub regibus primum, consulibus deinde, ac dictatoribus, decemvirisque, ac tribunis consularibus gessere.* Liv. VI. 1.

Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere. Libertatem, et consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur; neque decemviris potestas ultra biennium; nec tribunorum militum consulare jus diu valuit. Tac. An. lib. I.

nations

nations of the earth—to draw kings into whoredom—and to enrich the world with her merchandize—is now become the companion of devils, and the habitation of impurity.

And I heard another voice from heaven, crying, Come out of her, my people; and be not partakers of her sins, that you may not suffer through her crimes. For her sins have reached unto heaven; and have now called down justice from the throne of God. Now she feels the retribution of all her crimes. The cup, that she mixed for others, is returned doubly drugged to her own lips. Her anguish, and distress now equal her pride, and luxury: and she who said in her heart, I sit as a queen; I shall see no sorrow; hath, in one short day, experienced an accumulation of every evil.

Then shall the kings of the earth, who wantoned in her hours of dalliance, bemoan her fate; when standing afar off, they shall see the smoke ascend from the fire that consumes her. Alas! alas! they cry, thou great city, in how short a moment is thy destruction completed!—Then also shall the merchants of the earth wail over her, crying Who shall now purchase her rich metals, her precious spices, and her costly vestments. Alas! alas! She who was cloathed in purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, is now in a moment stripped of all her gorgeous array; and all her wealth laid waste.—Then shall the seamen, and all, who traffic in ships, when they see afar off the smoke ascending from her destruction, lament over her. Alas! alas! that great city, which once employed so many ships, is now in one moment become desolate†.—But, O ye heavens, rejoice—ye holy apostles, and prophets—God hath revenged your cause.

† These lamentations over Babylon seem to be copied from the 26th and 27th chapters of Ezekiel.

21. Then I saw a mighty angel raise a mill-stone; and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus shall the great city of Babylon sink; and
 22. 23. her name shall be no more remembered. The voice of music, and dancing shall no more resound within thy walls—The light of the candle shall disappear—and the rejoicing of the marriage-feast no more be heard. The artist shall no more display his curious works; nor the foreign merchant his rich stores. The sound of industry, and labour shall cease in thy street. The sorceries, by which thou hast deluded the nations, shall now be abolished; and the blood of the saints and prophets, who have
 24. been slain within thy walls, now call for vengeance.

C H A P.
XIX.

1. After these things, I heard a loud voice in heaven crying, Hallelujah!—Salvation, honour, glory, and power be ascribed to God!
 2. 3. True, and just are all thy judgments. Thou hast judged the great corrupter of the earth; and hast avenged the blood of thy servants upon their wicked persecutor; whose smoke ascendeth for ever, and ever.—Then all the host of heaven fell down before God, and united in one voice of praise, Hallelujah!

5. 6. After a solemn pause, the voice of praise again began. It was loud, as distant thunder; yet sweet as the fall of waters: Hallelujah—Hallelujah, the Lord Almighty reigneth. Praise him all his servants.—Now exalt, and glorify his name: for the marriage of the Lamb approacheth. His bride is ready. She is arrayed in pure white. Pure white expresses the righteousness of the saints.

9. Then an angel said to me, These are the words of God: write the happiness of them, who are invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.—Then I fell at the feet of the angel to worship him, not knowing who he was. But he rebuked me, saying; Worship me not: I am thy fellow-servant; and equally with thee bear testimony to Jesus. Worship God alone. Thy labours in the gospel, and the Spirit of prophecy, unite together in bearing testimony to Jesus.

After

After this I saw a glorious figure mounted on a white horse. Faithfulness, and truth went before him; and in righteousness he went to war with the remnant of his enemies. His eyes shone like flames of fire; and on his head he wore many crowns. His vesture was dipped in blood. His name no man knew; but he was called the *Word of God*. And the armies of heaven followed him, riding on white horses; and clothed in pure linen. Out of his mouth issued a sharp sword; with which he fought the battles of the Lord. He smote the nations, and ruled them with a rod of iron: he trod the wine-presses of the wrath of God. On his vesture was written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried with a loud voice to all the birds of prey, that flew under the copes of heaven; Gather yourselves together to the banquet of the Lord. Ye shall eat the flesh of kings, and mighty men; and devour the carcases of all their mighty hosts.—And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, with their armies, gathered, to make war on him, that rode on the white horse. And the beast was taken; and the false prophets who had deceived with lying wonders; and they were thrown alive into a lake of fire. The rest were slain with the sword of him, who rode upon the white horse.—And I saw an angel descend from heaven with the key of the bottomless pit in one hand; and a massy chain in the other. And he seized the dragon, the old serpent, the devil; and bound him in the bottomless pit; and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, during the space of a thousand years; that he may deceive the nations no more,

C H A P.
XX.
1. 2.

18. This noble image was probably taken from Ezekiel (xxxix. 17). *Thus saith the Lord, speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field; Assemble yourselves together, and come; gather yourselves, on every side, to my sacrifice—that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood; even the flesh of the mighty; and the blood of the princes of the earth,*

till that period end; and then he shall be loosed again for a little time.

4. Then I saw thrones placed, and judges sitting on them in judgment: and I saw the souls of them, who had suffered for the testimony of Jesus: they were appointed to reign with him a
5. thousand years. But the rest of the dead were not raised, till after the thousand years were expired. This is the first resurrection; and
6. happy are they who have a part in it. On them the second death hath no power: but they shall be priests with God, and Christ;
7. and reign with him a thousand years. At the end of that time shall
8. Satan be loosed again; and go forth to deceive the nations, from one end of the earth to the other. And Gog and Magog shall lead forth the armies of darkness, whose number is as the sand of the
9. sea. And they overspread the face of the earth; and compassed round the camp of the saints, and the holy city. Then fire came
10. down from God, and destroyed them. And the devil was cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophets were thrown; and there he was tormented for ever.

11. Then I saw a large, white throne, and an awful figure sat upon it, from whose face the earth, and the heavens fled. And the
12. dead stood before God, and the books were opened. And the dead
13. were judged from the books, according to their works. The sea gave up her dead; and death, and the grave resigned all they had subdued; and all were judged according to their works. Then
14. death, and the grave were cast into the lake.—This is the second
15. death: and whoever were found, whose names were not written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire.

CHAP.
XXII.

1. Then I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the sea, and
2. all the substance of the old world, had passed away. I saw the holy

8. Gog, and Magog seem to allude to Ezekiel in the 38th, and 39th chapters.

city, the new Jerufalem, defcending from heaven, prepared as a
 bride to meet her husband. Then a voice from heaven proclaimed;
 Behold, the tabernacle of God is now with man. God himfelf
 will dwell on earth; he will be their God, and they fhall be his
 people. He will wipe away tears from their eyes. Sorrow, and
 pain, and death, and every evil thing are now paffed away. Then
 he, that fat on the throne, faid; Behold I make all things new.
 Write thefe things. All is finifhed. I am the firft, and the laft.
 From henceforth I give freely to the thirfty foul of the fountain of
 life: and thus will I be a father to him, who hath overcome the
 temptations of the world; and he fhall be a fon to me; while the
 wicked fhall be caft into the lake of fire; which is the fecond
 death.

Then one of the angels, who had the feven vials, faid to me,
 Come up hither, and I will fhew thee the bride of the Lamb.—
 As he faid this, he carried me to a lofty mountain, and fhewed me
 the great city, the holy Jerufalem, defcending from heaven in the
 glory of God. The light, which fpread around it, was like
 the fparkling luftre of a gem. It's walls were lofty, having twelve
 gates; at each of which fat an angel. Over it's gates, which were
 three on every fide of the four walls of the city, were infcribed the
 names of the twelve tribes of Ifrael: the wall had twelve foun-
 dations; on which were infcribed the names of the twelve apoftles
 of the Lamb.—Then the angel, who fpoke to me, having a
 golden reed in his hand, meafured the city, and it's walls. The
 city was fquare; and meafured twelve thoufand furlongs on the
 feveral fides of the wall; which were one hundred and forty-four
 cubits high, according to the meafure of a man. The walls were
 of jafper; and the buildings of the city had the appearance of gold;
 but transparent like chryftal. The walls were founded on precious
 ftones of various kinds, twelve in number. The gates were of
 pearl;

pearl; and the streets, like the buildings, of transparent gold.—
 22. But I saw no temple. The presence of God, and of the Lamb,
 23. was the only temple. Nor was there any sun, or moon. The
 24. glory of the Lord was it's only light. In this glorious light shall
 25. all nations walk, which inherit the salvation of God. It's gates
 26. shall never be shut. Hither shall be brought whatever is great
 27. and glorious upon earth. No pollution shall be found in it. They
 only shall enter, whose names are written in the book of life.

C H A P.
 XXII.

1. 2.

Then the angel shewed me a pure river, clear as cristal, issuing
 from the throne; and running through the midst of the city; on
 the banks of which stood the tree of life; which bore fruit every
 month; and always of a different kind. The leaves of the tree
 3. were health to the nations. No curse can enter here. The throne
 of God secures it; where all his servants worship him in peace.
 4. They shall always stand before him; and his name shall be on
 5. their foreheads. They have no occasion for the sun, nor any other
 light; the Lord himself giveth them light; and they shall reign
 for ever.

6. Then the angel declared the truth of all I had seen; assuring
 me, that the same Lord, who had inspired the holy prophets, had
 7. sent him to give me this revelation of his will. All these things,
 he told me, should speedily come to pass; and happy should they
 be, who paid a due attention to them.

8. Then I fell down at the feet of the angel, who shewed me these
 9. things. But he rebuked me, saying; Forbear: I am thy fellow-
 servant only; and one of the prophets, thy brethren, who obey
 the commandments of God. Him only shalt thou worship.—

10. Then the angel said; Seal not up the prophecies of this book.

11. The time approaches: yet let men have opportunity: let them
 either continue in their sins, if they are obstinate; or, if they are
 well-disposed, let them have the means of leading holy, and godly
 lives.

Behold,

Behold, I come quickly, faith the Lord; and bring my reward 12.
 with me; and shall recompence every man, according to his work.
 I am the Beginning, and the End: the First, and the Last. Happy 13. 14.
 are they, who obey my commandments; and gain access to the
 tree of life. They shall enter the gates of the city; from which 15.
 all wickedness shall be excluded.

Thus (said Jesus to me in his own person) I have sent my 16.
 messenger to testify all these things to the churches. I am the
 root, and the branch of David—the morning star: and let all my 17.
 holy servants with for my coming; and desire to drink of the
 fountain of everlasting life.

Let no one alter the things contained in this book. If any one 18.
 add to it, God will lay the plagues contained in it on him. Or 19.
 if any one diminish from it, God will take from him his part in
 the book of life; and in the blessings contained in it. The com- 20.
 pletion of *all* approaches.

Amen! blessed Jesus, come as thou hast promised!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen! 21.

18. These words are so apposite a conclusion to the whole *New Testament*; that some interpreters believe John meant it as such. It is certainly an apposite conclusion; but I find no ground for such an opinion.

END OF THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

E R R A T A.

Page.

- 1 for *women*, read *woman*—in a note.
- 29 for *effectual*, read *ineffectual*.
- 41 for *πεινη*, read *πεινη*—note.
- 86 for *απηγξατο*, read *απηγξατο*—note.
- 127 for *signifies*, read *signify*—note.
- 131 for *πειραξων*, read *πειραξων*—note.
- 142 for *Matt. xv. 11*, read *see a note on Matt. xxvii. 39*.
- 206 for *αναγκαξω*, read *αναγκαξω*—note.
- 214 for *σωξω*, read *σωξω*—note.
- 350 for *Heb. i. 5*, read *Hab. i. 5*.
- 435 for *κορινδιαζειν*, read *κορινδιαζειν*—note.
- 447 for *suborination*, read *subordination*.
- 454 for *their gifts*, read *his gifts*, and for *they*, read *he*—note.
- 472 for *live, and with*, read *live, and die with*.
- 557 for *κρητιζειν*, read *κρητιζειν*—note.
- 582 for *Cain's*, read *Cain's sacrifice*.
- 582 for *πατριδα επιζητησι*, read *πατριδα επιζητησι*—note.
- 609 for *αγαπη εκτης*, read *αγαπη εκτης*—note.